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Jan: 1904

SHORT STUDIES

ON

GREAT SUBJECTS.

THIRD SERIES.

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SHORT STUDIES

ON

GREAT SUBJECTS.

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VOL. III.

NEW IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
AND BOMBAY
1903

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

First issued in the Silver Library, Nov. 1890.
Reprinted, March 1893, Nov. 1894, April 1896, Feb. 1898.
Re-issued in new style, July 1898.
Reprinted, June 1900, March 1903.

PREFACE.

Most of the Essays in this volume have already appeared in English or American journals. The Essay on 'Divus Cæsar' and the 'Leaves from a South African Journal' are published for the first time.

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ANNALS OF AN ENGLISH ABBEY.

I.

HUMAN HISTORY, say the philosophers, is the evolution of events which lie already in their causes, as the properties of geometrical figures lie in the scientific definition of those figures. The qualities which Euclid proves to belong to the circle, exist in the circle eternally. There is no before and no after, and the sense of sequence is only in the successive steps by which proposition after proposition is made known to the limited understanding of man. In like manner the unnumbered multitude of living things, the animated throng of beings which fill the air, and crowd the water and the earth, lie potentially in the elemental germs out of which they seem to be developed; and the life of the individual man, the long sequel of the acts and fortunes of his race, and all that he has done and is to do, till the type is

exhausted and gives place to other combinations, is governed by laws as inherent and as necessary as those through which the mathematician develops his inferences from the equation of an ellipse.

Were the equation of man constructed out of elements as few and simple, we should know all that has been, and all that is to be, without moving from our library chairs; but with the knowledge we should lose the uncertainty which gives life its purpose and its interest. The pleasure of existence depends upon its anxieties, and if we are indeed but the *automata spiritualia* which Leibnitz defines us to be, then, of all the gifts which God has bestowed upon us, the choicest is the trick which He has played upon our understandings—which makes the certain appear as uncertain, which cheats us with the belief that the future is in our hands, to mould either for good or ill. Of the dynamic forces of humanity the most powerful is for ever concealed from us. The acorn has produced the oak, and the oak the acorn, from the time when oaks first began to be, and one oak, for practical purposes, is identical with another. Man produces man; but each individual brings into the world a character and capabilities differing from those of his fellows, and incalculable till they have had room to display themselves. An idea generated

in a single mind penetrates the circle of mankind, and shapes them afresh after its likeness. We talk of a science of history—we dream that we can trace laws of causation which governed the actions of our fathers, and from which we can forecast the tendencies of generations to come. The spontaneous force in the soul of a single man of genius will defeat our subtlest calculations:—and of all forecasts of the future, there is but one on which we can repose with confidence, that nothing is certain but the unforeseen.

So long as the rules of our spiritual navigation were supposed to be definitely known; so long as conscience was believed to be the voice of God in us, and there were celestial constellations to which we could appeal to correct its variations, it mattered little whether we comprehended to what port we were bound. Our course had been laid down for us by the Master Navigator of the Universe, and we could sail on without misgivings over the ocean of untried possibilities. From a combination of many causes we are passing now into a sea where our charts fail us, and the stars have ceased to shine. The tongue of the prudent speaks stammeringly. The fool clamours that he is as wise as the sage, and the sage shrinks from saying that it is not so. Authority is mute. One man, we are told, is as good as another: each

by Divine charter may think as he pleases, and carve his actions after his own liking. Institutions crumble; creeds resolve themselves into words; forms of government disintegrate, and there is no longer any word of command. In place of the pilots who stood once at the helm, gave their orders and compelled obedience, we have crews now, all equal, who decide by the majority of votes. We have entered on an age of universal democracy, political and spiritual, such as the world has never seen before; and civilised mankind are broken into two hundred million units, each thinking and doing what is good in his own eyes.

Experience of the past forbids the belief that anarchy will continue for ever. Man is a gregarious animal, and, as the earth fills up, the flocks must be packed more densely. Fresh combinations are inevitable—and combinations cohere only when formed on definite principles to which individual inclinations must bend. Strong minds have a natural tendency to direct weak minds. Majorities vote wrongly. The wrong course runs the ship upon the rocks; and the fool, when his folly issues in practical disaster, understands in some degree that he is a fool. The universal sand-heap will and must once more organise itself; though in what shape politically, or round

what kind of spiritual conviction, it were waste of labour to conjecture. Meanwhile the results of life as they appear in advanced countries like England and America were never less interesting. Each Englishman, each American, left to his own guidance and compelled by the restlessness of his nature to aspire to something, turns to the one direction plainly open to him, and sets himself with might and main to make money. Money is power; money commands a certain kind of enjoyment; the excessive want of it is palpable disenjoyment. We desire to succeed; to make ourselves considerable among our fellows; and money is the best standard of measurement readily appreciable. But when we have got it we are still unsatisfied. The pleasures which money will buy are soon exhausted. The chief delight has been in the getting; the thing got becomes a weariness: and we must either throw our inclinations into chains and determine to desire nothing but what the dollar will purchase for us, or else to escape vacuity we fling ourselves into *dilettante* sciences, study the anatomy of shells and beetles, or find a spurious interest in the fictitious world of novel-writers, which reality denies us in our own.

On these terms the better sort of men and women find existence grow tedious. So long as they are

obliged to work they are in contact with facts, and retain their moral health. When money is provided in sufficient quantities, and work has become unnecessary, they cast about for occupation. The new order of things has none to give them of a noble kind, and in despair they fling themselves into the past. They see in the old world what the modern world fails to provide. The Catholic Church, which their fathers broke with, tells them that the disease from which they suffer is the natural fruit of apostasy. The Catholic Church alone can fill the void in their hearts. The noble employment for which they pine the Church holds out with ever-open hands—employment in which the companies of the saints earned the aureoles around their brows—and many and many a high-souled man and woman among us is taking the Church at its word, and trying the experiment. The Reformers led them out into the wilderness, but in that wilderness was no Sinai with the revelation of a new law—only a sandy desert strewed with nuggets of gold. There was no Jordan, with a promised land beyond it—only a deluding mirage with gold-dust for water.

Thus, among other strange phenomena of this waning century, we see once more rising among us, as if by enchantment, the religious orders of the

Middle Ages; Benedictines, Carmelites, Dominicans: houses of monks and nuns, to which American and English ladies and gentlemen are once more gathering as of old, flying no longer from a world of violence or profligacy, but from a world of emptiness and spiritual death.

In Spain and Italy, where the continuity of Catholicism has been unbroken, and the conventual life has been too long familiar to seek to disguise its true features, it is regarded with the same hatred with which it was abhorred by our fathers; it denotes nothing but sensuality, ignorance, and sin. The Italian Government is rooting out the whole system as ruthlessly as Henry VIII. Royalists and Republicans may make their alternate revolutions in the Spanish peninsula; the provinces submit indifferently, knowing that to them it matters little whether they be ruled by king or president; but suggest a restoration of the cowled fraternities, and the paving-stones of Valladolid and Burgos would rise up in mutiny. In England, where the past is obscured by sentimental passion; in America, where there is no past, or where the lessons of the old world are supposed to have no application; in France, where the entire nation is swimming in a sea of anarchy, and the vessel of the State is shattered and the drowning

wretches cling to each floating plank which the waves drift within their reach, conventual institutions are springing up as mushrooms after an autumn rain. As mushrooms is it to be? growing as fast, and as soon to perish? Or are we really witnessing the revival of an order of things which, after a violent overthrow, is recommencing a second period of enduring energy and power?

Time will answer. It depends on whether the Catholic form of Christianity can recover its hold on the convictions of educated men. Meanwhile it will not be uninteresting to look particularly at the history of one of these foundations as it actually existed in ancient England. As in science, if we would know the nature of any animal or plant, we can learn much, if not the whole, of its character from a single specimen, so the career of a distinguished abbey, from its beginning to its end, can hardly fail to resemble what other abbeys are likely to be, if we are again to have them among us. Planted in the same soil of human life, surrounded by the same temptations, and nourished by the same influences, the idea will naturally develop in the same direction.

The old English records, in the course of publication under the Master of the Rolls, provide an exceptional opportunity for a study of this kind; and with-

out further preface I shall introduce the reader to the Abbey of St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, the wealthiest and most brilliant of all the religious houses of Great Britain, the annals of which have been lately edited by the accomplished and learned Mr. Riley.[1]

The surviving ruins convey a more imposing sense of the ancient magnificence than Melrose, or Fountains, or Glastonbury. The moral ruin which preceded the suppression—not magnificent, but shameful and ignominious—has the advantage of being attested to us by evidence to which the most passionate admirer of the ages of faith can make no exception. But to this we shall be more properly led by pursuing the course of the story.

The town of St. Albans, famous in English history for two battles fought there in the Wars of the Roses, stands on the great North Road, twenty miles from London, on the site of the Roman Verulam. The aboriginal British village was a military post in the time of the Emperor Nero. Destroyed by Boadicea, the works were reconstructed when Britain was finally subdued, and Verulam grew into a municipal

[1] [1. *Gesta Abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani. A Thomâ Walsingham compilata, regnante Ricardo Secundo.*

2. *Johannis Amundesham Annales Mon. S. Albani.*

3. *Registrum Abbatiæ Johannis Whethampsted.* Edited by Henry Thomas Riley, Barrister-at-Law.]

town of wealth and consequence. The preachers of Christianity followed in the track of the legions; and in the Hertfordshire colony was shed the blood of the first English martyr to the new faith. Albanus, a citizen of Verulam, was called under the Diocletian persecution to give account for his apostasy from the religion of the masters of the world, and, preferring Christ to the emperor, was sent to join his Lord by the sword of the executioner. Legend embellished the death-scene with miracles which it is needless to repeat. The general fact that a person bearing the name Albanus was killed at this spot because he was a Christian may be accepted as true. When the persecution ceased the martyrdom was commemorated by an inscription on the wall of the town. A church was built on the site where the blood had fallen. It acquired a special sanctity, and during the Pelagian controversy was the scene of a provincial council. St. German of Auxerre, the champion of orthodoxy against Pelagius, preached and paid his orisons at St Alban's tomb.

A more dangerous enemy than a theorist on the freedom of the will appeared upon the scene immediately after; Britain was overwhelmed by a flood of Saxon heathens; Roman civilisation disappeared in smoke and ruins; and of Verulam and all that it

contained, there was nothing left by the middle of the sixth century but a green rounded hill, sloping up from the little river Ver, where sheep browsed on the undulating ridges which clothed and concealed the wreck of street and market-place. There, for generation after generation, lay unthought of and undisturbed the bones of England's Protomartyr. The fame of his suffering was revived when Augustine brought back Christianity. But Alban himself still slept in his unknown grave, and three hundred and fifty years of rain and sunshine, and gathering mould and springing herbage, had effaced the last traces of his traditional resting-place. Somewhere under those turf mounds he was lying. Piety forbade the belief that remains so precious could have perished like common bones. But there was no divining-rod to detect the buried treasure. Only God could reveal where it was deposited; and devout souls could but wait and pray that in time the mystery might be made known.

Miracle like that which restored the cross on which the Saviour had suffered to the adoration of the Christian world, discovered in the fulness of time the relics of His servant.

In the year 758, Mercia, the central kingdom of the Saxon Heptarchy, was shaken by civil disorder.

Ethelbald, the king, was killed. Beornred, who snatched at the throne, was defeated and had to fly for his life. The Thanes, *unanimi consensu*, elected as their sovereign a youth named Offa, brave in battle and noble in blood, for he was seventeenth in descent from Odin himself. The seven kingdoms were already tending to become one. Offa was no sooner in the saddle than he began to extend his borders at the expense of his neighbours, fell into correspondence with Charlemagne—aspired, perhaps, to imitate Charlemagne on a smaller scale, and become monarch of a united England. Aiming especially at securing a sea-board, he coveted the Eastern counties, and he proposed a match for one of his daughters with Ethelbert of East Anglia. The proposition was well entertained, and Ethelbert paid a visit to the Mercian court to make acquaintance with his bride. The mind of Offa was set rather on the territories than the person of his intended son-in-law. His own queen was ambitious like Lady Macbeth for her husband's greatness, and as little scrupulous to the means that she used. She suggested that Ethelbert was in his power, and that there was a shorter road than marriage towards the annexation of the coveted province. Offa, a professing Christian, started in horror at the hint of murder. Ethelbert, never-

theless, having entered Offa's castle, never left it alive. Feasted in splendour, and placed to rest in a gorgeous bed hung with gold and purple, he was let down through a trap-door and smothered below with pillows. Offa seized East Anglia and obtained his desires; but the ghost of the murdered Ethelbert haunted his slumbers and made night hideous to him. He shut himself up in his chamber. He refused to touch food. Awake he was haunted by his crime—when exhaustion brought sleep, it was to exchange the pain of remorse for the more fearful anguish of imagination. At length in a dream, or from the suggestions of his confessor, he learnt the condition on which he might be pardoned. He must discover the bones of St. Alban, and raise an abbey in his honour.

The sceptical reader will have his private thoughts on the mode in which the adventure was achieved. In the legend which passes as history, King Offa sent to the Bishop (or Archbishop as he was then called) of Lichfield to meet him with his brother prelates on the site of Verulam. It was a summer day, August 1, 793, a year after the murder. Offa, then a grey-haired man of sixty or thereabouts, appeared on horseback attended by his son and his thanes. The prelates marched in procession with

banners and crosiers, and long files of priests and monks chanting their Litanies. Lightning flashed suddenly out of the sky and struck the ground before their feet with blinding splendour. The bishops threw themselves on their knees and prayed. The king and his lords prayed. The spectators who had gathered in a crowd joined in expectant adoration. At length, trembling with excitement, *terram percutiunt*, 'they strike the earth.' 'There was no need of long search when Heaven had pointed to the spot.' St. Alban's skeleton, or the bones composing it, was found entire. Evidence of an earthly kind to identify them as really those of Alban there was none —but none was needed. The celestial indication was itself proof conclusive. Weak believers, if any such were present, had their doubts dispelled by the powers which the sacred things at once displayed. Lame men leapt upon their feet, deaf ears heard, and blind eyes were opened. A band of gold was fastened about the skull with Alban's name inscribed upon it. The relics were deposited tenderly in a *loculus* or box inlaid with gold and set with sapphires, and Offa set out instantly for Rome to impart his discovery to Pope Adrian the First. He confessed his guilt for the murder of Ethelbert. He related his dream and the result of it. Adrian admitted

the Protomartyr at once on the roll of the Saints, gave Offa power to found his monastery *in tuorum peccatorum remissionem*, and promised that it should be the peculiar charge of himself and his successors. No bishop, archbishop, or even legate should have authority to meddle with it.

On the king's return to England a great council of thanes and bishops was held at Verulam, for the ceremony of laying the first stone; a number of monks were collected from the best-ordered existing houses; and endowed with broad lands, fenced round with privileges and liberties, and exempt from fees and taxes to king or pontiff, St. Alban's Abbey began to be a fact.

Of Willegod, the first Abbot, little survives but the name. This much only is distinctly visible, that about the year 793 there was established here, as in so many other places, a community of persons who had bound themselves by the usual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, men and women (for a separate convent of sisters formed part of the foundation) who had forsworn all earthly ties, all earthly interests and ambitions, and had determined to spend their lives in devotional exercises, in attending the poor and sick, in meditation and intercessory prayer. In this conception, the monasteries were to be ever-

burning lamps, from which Divine grace should perennially radiate.

Reality, in this world of ours, falls generally too short of theory. The shortcomings at St. Alban's became visible scandalously soon. The first care of the monks should have been for their founder. Offa died soon after the abbey was set going. The ungrateful Willegod allowed the king's body to be consigned by unknown hands to an unknown grave. It was uncertain whether the burial was so much as Christian. Willegod was punished for his negligence by an illness of which he died. The brethren could but hope that Offa's soul might not be suffering for it in purgatory.

The sapling, planted, as it was, full grown, was slow in taking root. Eadric, the second abbot, a relation of Offa's, showed the same carelessness, and ended soon also an equally undistinguished rule. Wulsig, the next, was actively objectionable. He was of the blood royal, and, *erectus est in superbiam*, was lifted up with pride. Thinking more of his descent from Odin than of his bondage to Christ, Wulsig dressed in silks, spent his time in hunting-field and banquet,—was a politician and a courtier. With these expensive tastes he was accused of wasting the Church's treasures, and, worst crime of all,

he invited ladies to dine with him in the abbot's parlour, and lodged the nuns too near his private chamber. Was it for this that lightning had come from heaven to discover the relics of the Proto-martyr? The scandalised brethren rose in mutiny against their *Carnalis Abbas*. Wulsig, too, closed his career prematurely. He died, as was said, by poison,—*ut dicitur potionatus*,—and was followed to his grave by the curses of the community.

Slightly, very slightly, matters now mended. Abbot Wulnoth, who succeeded, shifted away the nuns, established discipline, and recovered lands which Wulsig had alienated. But Wulnoth too was far from a saint. Too often he was to be met afield in buff jerkin, with horn and hunting-knife, when he ought to have been at chapel. He preferred hawk and hound to mass-book and breviary. St. Alban's Abbey seemed likely to be a failure after all. Eadfrith, fifth abbot, was no better. Eadfrith was nobly born, but *filius hujus sæculi*, a child of this world, who set a pernicious example to the weaker brethren. Clearly enough, the tree which Offa had planted so carefully needed to be watered afresh or it would wither away.

Help came when it was least looked for. Uneasy times had dawned for Saxon England. Each summer

brought fleets into the Channel of plundering Danes. They landed in force. Half the country was overrun and wasted by them. Their chiefs were heathens, who spared neither shrine nor altar, monk nor nun. St. Alban's, far inland as it was, had not escaped a visit from them, and half the treasures of the Church had been carried off. From these stones was raised up a saviour. Wulfa, a Danish rover, whose heart was penetrated, became, on one of these marauding visits, converted to Christianity. He carried his fervid spirit into his faith, turned hermit, settled himself down in St. Alban's woods to crusts and watercresses; and so famed among the degenerate Saxons became the pirate recluse, that high prelates went to him to confess their sins and be absolved; while Abbot Eadfrith, shamed by such an example at his door, laid down his crosier, took to the woods at Wulfa's side, and the community, inspired with fresh enthusiasm, mended their ways.

A series of abbots followed who brought St. Alban's into the average condition of Saxon monasteries. They were neither devout especially nor especially undevout. They were wholesome churchmen, of solid, substantial type, who carried on their business with propriety and decency. As the country became more settled, a town sprang up under the

abbey's shadow, with a market and a parish church. Marshes were drained, woods were cleared. The abbey itself was enlarged. In laying the foundations for the new buildings the ruins were exposed of the ancient Roman city; walls and pavements, cellars and vaults, and arched passages which became the dens of thieves and highwaymen. The bricks were used again for modern houses. The vaults and caves were filled and levelled. Inside the abbey and outside chaos was reduced to order, and life became rational and human. As at present, in the disinterment of the Assyrian and Babylonian monuments there is an eagerness to discover connecting links with the sacred Hebrew history, so at St. Alban's pious eyes were on the watch for traces of the martyred saint. Imagination, and possibly invention, came to the assistance of fact. In the *débris* of a Roman house were found urns of pottery and glass, containing, as was assumed, ashes of men and women. Both urns and ashes, as belonging to unbaptized heathen, were carefully destroyed. Old scrolls and books were said to have been discovered also, which the learned declared to be books of religion, or rituals of devils, and which, therefore, were consigned to the fire. A crumbling box, however, was turned up, with a parchment in it in ancient British, and this on examination proved to be a life

of St. Albanus himself, agreeing in all particulars with the account given of him by Bede. It was part of the duty of monks to learn by heart the biographies of their patron saints. The minuteness of agreement, therefore, throws suspicion on the independence of the testimony. The British version was, nevertheless, at once translated into Latin, and appointed to be read in the Church, and further curious inquiry was cut short by miracle. The translation was no sooner complete than the parchment crumbled to dust.

Monkish fraud! the modern reader exclaims impatiently. Rather, perhaps, without more fraud or thought of fraud than has been displayed by some enthusiastic decipherers of the arrow-head inscriptions. A veritable record of some kind or other, in a half-known language, may easily have been construed into a preconceived meaning by an over-credulous imagination, without any dishonesty at all. When the balance is eventually struck between the opposing tendencies which evolve between them the spiritual history of mankind, an over-readiness to believe in a cause generally honourable will be found to have been less mischievous than the scepticism which creates nothing, and is content to sneer and to destroy.

So long as the Saxon monastery continued, the

prelacy of the abbey continued to run in the great Saxon families. Two nobly-born brethren, Leofric, and Alfric who was afterwards Primate, ruled successively at St. Alban's,—both men of distinguished piety, both of them a perplexity to the monastic community, which knew not whether most to praise or blame their administration. Those abbots found most favour with the brethren who most enriched the corporation. Large land grants fell in under Leofric and Alfric, and therefore they were admired and honoured; but the monks considered that they were themselves the first object of Christ's care, and that the increased wealth should show itself in increase of comfort. The two brothers regarded the poor and miserable as having a superior claim, and lavished Christ's patrimony in relieving the necessities of the neighbourhood. Even the jewels intended for St. Alban's shrine were sacrificed in a severe famine—Abbot Leofric daring to say that the true temples of Christ were the bodies of his suffering members.

Whether the abbot did well or ill in this judgment of his, snuffled a discontented brother, *Noverit ille qui nihil ignorat*—'Let Him determine who knoweth all things.' The apostle who thought most about the poor was the traitor Judas. The poor we had always with us, and pious monks of St. Alban's were

not to be met with every day. There was open mutiny at last, and the secular arm had to be called in. Leofric, excellent as he was, proved *rebellibus austerus* — a severe master to rebellious servants. Rough policemen came down from London and chained up the most refractory in their cells. The rest were left to grumble in private over their shortened rations.

Under Abbot Alfric the monotony of ordinary life was broken by a curious episode. The special distinction of the abbey was the possession of the genuine relics of the great Protomartyr. No one questioned that they had been really discovered by Offa. A doubt was raised, however, and it will be seen with reason, whether the shrine at St. Alban's continued to hold them. The abbey had been plundered by the Danes. The Danes, it was asserted, were not likely to have left behind the greatest treasure that it possessed; and tradition so far admitted the argument that in the current story the relics were said to have been actually carried away to Denmark, and to have been recovered by the adventurous ingenuity of a member of the convent. That a band of pagan warriors should have burdened themselves with a box of bones is not very probable. It is likely enough that they stripped the gold from the shrine. It is

just possible that, seeing the extraordinary importance attached to such things by the monks, they might have taken them away intending to ransom them. The Danish business, at any rate, whether real or imaginary, is a necessary feature of the story which is now to be told, and a better illustration could not be found of the respect with which the remains of saints were regarded. They were more precious and more coveted than any other form of property, yet the ordinary rules of property did not apply to what it was held permissible and even commendable to steal.

A pretension was suddenly set up by the monks of Ely that they and only they possessed the genuine skeleton of the martyr of Verulam, and they had come by it in the following manner: In Abbot Alfric's time half England had become Danish, and other fleets of Danes were going and coming. The abbot had reason to expect that a troop of them were about to visit St. Alban's, and, in resentment at the trick which had been played upon their countrymen, might take away the relics once more. The Ely monastery lay among swamps and morasses not easily penetrable. Abbot Alfric therefore wrote to his friends there asking them to take charge of St. Alban's *loculus* till the danger should be over. The

monks of Ely professed themselves highly honoured by so precious a charge. According to their account the box was sent, and the box was afterwards restored, but it had been restored rifled, with a skill of which they were not ashamed to boast, of its sacred contents. They had consigned the bones of the real Alban to their own treasure house. They sent back to Hertfordshire the bones of a sham Alban who had been one of their own abbots. So Ely insisted, and so the world believed, and forgave the fraud in consideration of the temptation.

Abbot Alfric, however, was equal to the occasion. He too insisted that he had played a trick, and a trick still more notable. His object had been to throw the Danes off the scent, but he declared that he had never seriously thought of parting with his choicest jewel. He knew the persons with whom he was dealing and had been beforehand with them. The real Alban had lain buried all along in a secret place in his own chapel. The *loculus* had carried to Ely the relics of a commonplace respectable brother, accompanied, to prevent suspicion, with jewels which were genuine. The monks of Ely might have made the change which they pretended, but they had gained nothing by it, and were themselves the parties deceived. *Sic dolori suo dolo pio decepti sunt* Elyenses;

so, to their sorrow, by a pious fraud the monks of Ely were taken in.

Thus encountered, the world who required St. Alban's help knew not to which shrine they should pay their adorations. Edward the Confessor was called in, and gave judgment for St. Alban's; but who was Edward, and what could Edward know of such a matter more than another man? The Pope was appealed to. The Pope decided for the Hertfordshire abbey also; but even the Pope was not yet infallible. Heaven itself gave an uncertain answer. The St. Alban's relics worked miracles. The Ely relics replied with other miracles. The power of self-multiplication, attributed by modern Catholics to the wood of the true cross, would have explained the difficulty; but no one thought of this hypothesis and the controversy raged on for two centuries. In the hope of making an end there was at length a formal examination of the relics themselves. The Bishop of Lincoln and a commissioner from Ely came to St. Alban's. The shrine was solemnly opened and the bones were lifted out. King Offa had fastened a band of gold about the skull. To the consternation of the men of Hertfordshire the band was gone, and in the place of it a strip of parchment, attached by a silk thread, on which, however, was emblazoned in

golden characters of great antiquity: *Hic est Sanctus Albanus*. Ely claimed the victory. What now could St. Alban's say? But St. Alban's was not yet at its last resource. An account was produced that an artist, employed many generations before in decorating the shrine, had taken the gold and used it. The abbot of the time discovered what had been done too late to recover the band, and had attached the scroll as a substitute.

All parties were thus again at sea. The knot was too intricate for human hands to untie. Doubts had spread. The townspeople, and even the monks of the house themselves, were beginning to waver, and the blessed Alban himself found it necessary to interfere. A person of the neighbourhood, one Herbert Duckit, declared that one day when praying at the shrine he felt an emotion of incredulity. He found himself suddenly shrivelled to the dimensions of an ape, and returned to his natural size only when he renewed his convictions. This ought to have been sufficient: but the assurance was made doubly sure. A sceptical brother of the house was alone praying at night in the church. The shrine burst open; an awful form strode out of the obscurity, and stood in front of the prostrate unbeliever.

'*Ecce ego Albanus*,' the figure said. '*Hic quiesco.*

Nonne me vidisti de meo feretro exire? Behold me. I am Albanus. Here I rest. Didst thou not see me issue from my tomb?'

'Yea, Lord and Martyr, I did see thee,' the monk answered.

'*Hoc de cætero penitus palam testificare,*' said the saint. 'Bear me witness then, for the future, in the face of all men.'

With these words, *Beatus Albanus rediit in loculum suum.* The blessed Alban returned into his box.

Thus satisfactorily the uncertainty was well ended; for, as the chronicler naïvely observes, 'doubts of this kind were working mischief.' Questions had been raised of the genuineness of the relics of many other distinguished saints, — and fewer miracles had been worked in consequence [*unde minus solito in eorum ecclesiis miracula coruscârunt*].

On the Norman Conquest St. Alban's narrowly escaped shipwreck. Connected as it had been with the native princes, it was a stronghold of Saxon sentiment. At a convention which met at Westminster, soon after the battle of Hastings, the king let fall an expression of contemptuous surprise at the ease with which the Saxons had allowed themselves to be overcome. The abbot of St. Alban's, Abbot Frederic, himself a passionate nationalist, had been

exasperated perhaps at the submissiveness with which the Saxon priesthood had sacrificed their patriotism to the Pope's dictation.

'Most illustrious prince,' the abbot said, 'you owe your triumphs to the clergy of this realm. Our late sovereigns have been so heavenly-minded, that they have bestowed a large part of English soil on the houses of religion. Had temporal lords held it, they would have made a stouter fight. The clergy could not and would not.'

'Ha!' answered William, 'is that the secret of it? because the lands were taken from knights and gentlemen and given to you? Then the same thing may happen to me. The Danes may come again, and there will be no one to fight with them. Out of your own mouth I judge you. I will have your St. Alban's lands again, and settle men on them that I can depend upon.'

The domains of St. Alban's extended at this time from their own gates to London Stone, and the forest, with which the intervening country was covered, was the hiding-place of Saxon outlaws. Half was at once resumed by the Crown. The woods were cleared, roads were opened through them and patrolled. Abbot Frederic, taking to treason, was hunted off into the Ely marshes, where he died. The abbey itself

was saved by the intercession of Lanfranc; and, shorn of its splendour, it was placed under the rule of the Norman Paul, who was Lanfranc's near kinsman.

The change was in all ways beneficent. The days of ease and idleness were over. In Church and State the Norman Conquest meant the end of anarchy —called in modern language 'liberty,' — and the inauguration of order and discipline. We travel rapidly in these historical sketches. The reader flies in his express train in a few minutes through a couple of centuries. The centuries pass more slowly to those to whom the years are doled out day by day. Institutions grow and beneficently develop themselves, making their way into the hearts of generations which are shorter-lived than they, attracting love and respect, and winning loyal obedience; and then as gradually forfeiting by their shortcomings the allegiance which had been honourably gained in worthier periods. We see wealth and greatness; we see corruption and vice; and one seems to follow so close upon the other, that we fancy they must have always co-existed. We look more steadily, and we perceive long periods of time, in which there is first a growth and then a decay, like what we perceive in a tree of the forest.

The thing which has taken root and become strong, has thriven only because it has life in it—and the question which we ought to ask of any organized system, political or spiritual, is not whether it is good or evil, but whether it is alive or dead. If it is alive, we may take the rest for granted. Age follows age, families remain from father to son on the same spot and subjected to the same conditions. Where the conditions work to create happiness, favourable impressions are formed and are handed on, and deepen with the progress of the years. Where they work ill, displeasure, at first imperceptible, changes to anger, and then to impatience, and then to scorn, and rage, and active enmity. The spectator, looking back from a distant period, sees a worthless government tyrannizing for generations, or sees an exploded creed continuing to mislead the world after every active mind has divined its falsehood. He is impatient for the catastrophe. He wonders how men of sense could bear so long with the intolerable. He thanks God with snug self-satisfaction that he is not such a fool as his ancestors. Nature happily is more enduring than we are; or rather we, wise as we think ourselves, are in turn bearing unconsciously with theories and systems which philosophers will equally see to have been at

this moment dying or dead, and they will meditate on our patience with equal perplexity or with equal self-complacence.

In the two centuries which followed the Conquest, the monastic orders in England were in the maturity of vigour and worth. The Normans, while they retained their individuality, were among the noblest races which the earth has possessed. They were no blameless saints who picked their way through life in dread of spots upon their garments. They were Nature's policemen, whose mission was to substitute law and order for self-will and self-indulgence. They were rough-handed, but not rougher than occasion required, and they possessed the restrained moderation which is characteristic of real strength.

Paul, the first Norman abbot, was appointed to St. Alban's eleven years after the Conquest, in the year 1077. The historian Walsingham, the collector of the annals, and himself a monk of the abbey, thus speaks of him:

'This Paul was a man of piety and culture. The monastic discipline, which had been forgotten both by rulers and ruled in the seductions of pleasure, he determinately and yet prudently restored. He was content to work by degrees, lest too sudden changes should lead to mutiny; but so well he succeeded,

that under him St. Alban's Abbey became a school of religious observance for all England.'

King William, seeing the abbey rescued from Saxon license, restored part of the lands. Money was found with Lanfranc's help, and the abbey church, which had been allowed to fall to ruins, was simply and solidly rebuilt. The splendour so much admired in these later days was still absent. Monasticism did not begin to care about adorning its shell till the soul of it had begun to sicken. The Normans were content with sound and strong buildings which would last, if necessary, till Domesday. Abbot Paul collected books, and set his monks to read them. The easy life which had become a second nature was at an end. No pleasant lying in bed was allowed any longer in the mornings; no meat dinners upon fasting days; no retirement under pretence of sickness to the indulgence of the infirmary; no agreeable running in and out was permitted any longer with the sisterhoods.[1]

[1] At the best of times the morals of the Saxon monasteries seem to have been indifferent. In the Penitentials of Bede and Egbert, monks and nuns appear in as vicious colours as the most uncharitable Protestant has represented them. The details cannot be quoted, even in Latin. The curious may satisfy themselves by referring to the third volume of *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, pp. 327-8-9, and see pp. 417-428.

The rule of the order was set up in its rigidity, as a law to be obeyed; and as a mark of disapproval of the loose ways which had been so long tolerated, the austere Norman destroyed the monuments of his predecessors on the floor of the chancel, and 'spoke of them as idiots and blockheads.'

Offa had obtained from Rome, as a special favour, the exemption of the abbey from episcopal visitation. The abbots had gone their own way in consequence, and the absence of supervision had been the cause of degeneracy. Abbot Paul's successor, Richard, *ut monachos suos rigidius gubernaret*, that he might keep his monks in still tighter order, surrendered the so much cherished independence to the see of Lincoln; and thus by these two rulers St. Alban's was made for the first time to assume an aspect of genuine saintliness. The work which it was intended to do was actually done. In the person of the abbots were combined the functions of earthly magistrate and spiritual father; and for two centuries the monastery was at once an example of saintly life, and a living centre of authority where severity was tempered by affection. 'Happy,' says the proverb, 'is the country whose annals are a blank.' Happy the institution which works silently. Written history is a record of crimes and errors and their consequences. When

there is nothing to relate, day follows upon day and year upon year; and each has brought its allotted duties, and those duties have been fulfilled. In one direction only were symptoms visible of growing disorder at St. Alban's. Settled government and increasing fervour of piety brought with them a taste for the decoration of the shrine. Each abbot sought to add something to the magnificent receptacle in which the martyrs reposed. The appetite for splendour extended to the church, and as the treasury failed to meet the demands upon it, money was borrowed from the Jews, who alone had money to lend. The usurer's trade was held dishonourable, yet those who condescended to borrow had to stoop to the endurance of insult from the ministers of their necessities. In the twelfth century Aaron of Winchester, a noted money-lender of the day, presumed to present himself at the sacred gate of the abbey. Of course the porter spurned at him. As he turned away he flung an invective behind him, which stung by its truth. Proud as the martyr's shrine might seem, it was he—he, the despised Jew—who had found the gold with which it was inlaid. To him the monks owed the very roof over their heads, yet he was unworthy to set foot within their walls.

Slowly, too, very slowly, the severity of the rule

was relaxed, as enthusiasm cooled into habit. Twice a year, to keep down unruly inclinations, the monks were bled. Under Abbot Paul and his successors the bleeding was in the afternoon. It was treated as a matter of course, and those who had undergone the operation went about their business afterwards as if nothing had happened. In process of time they complained that the bleeding exhausted them. They were placed on the sick list, and they were bled in the mornings that they might have their dinners afterwards to comfort them. They were excused matins that they might lie in bed and recover strength. They were allowed a siesta after refection, or were sent into the country for change of air. The convent, as an act of general relief, were permitted to lay aside their heavy cloaks at shaving-time—an indulgence which, as the shaving house was the scene of gossip and pleasant talk, was received with extraordinary gratitude.

Traces again began to be visible of quarrels with the neighbouring gentry about the boundaries of property. The monks in their spiritual aspect might still be objects of awe and veneration. As land-owners they descended to the level of the laity, and received layman's usage. Parties formed even in the abbey itself. Profligate brothers took the side

of the children of this world, for private objects of their own. Sir Robert Fitzwilliam laid claim to a wood on the church estate. Brother William Pygon, who had a grudge against the abbot, forged a deed in Fitzwilliam's favour, stole the abbot's signet and sealed it. The fraud was discovered, and the wood was rescued, but the scandal had been terrible. The convent knew not how to proceed for fear of exposing their shame. Providence ultimately took the matter into its own hands. *Deorum injuriæ diis curæ.* Brother Pygon had been sent to expiate his sins by penance in a dependent priory. His allotted diet was meagre. One night, to console himself, he secreted a pastry and a flagon of wine, and not daring to enjoy himself where he would be seen, he carried his spoils to the cloaca. There seated he got drunk and fell asleep, and the night being cold he was frozen to death. In his joviality he had trolled catches which the frightened brothers conceived afterwards to have come from a chorus of devils; voices had been even overheard shrieking, '*Catch him, Satan! Catch him, Satan!*'

Of the Norman abbots, the most interesting after Abbot Paul was John of the Cell, elected in 1195, who had been a student in the University of Paris. The heads of the religious houses, having extensive

property to administer, were usually men of business. Abbot John, however, the chronicler observes, had more of Mary than of Martha in him, and contributed, in the brethren's opinion, less than he ought to have done to the outward greatness of his charge. Nor was he otherwise as considerate of them as a good abbot ought to have been. He rebuilt the refectory and the dormitory. He employed two of the monks, who were artists, to execute some of those exquisite carvings and paintings in the chapel which are the despair of modern architects; but to pay for these things he stopped the wine allowance for fifteen years, and kept the house upon beer and water.

On idleness, too, the secret poison of monasticism, Abbot John made constant war. When monasteries were first instituted, the monks were made to work upon the farms. As they grew in wealth and importance, outdoor labour was passed over to the serfs. For healthy industry a substitute was found in blood-letting; and the duties became exclusively 'religious.' The business of a monk was to pray and meditate. Prayer and meditation converted themselves inevitably into the mechanical repetition of devotional forms, and the victims of an unnatural system were driven as a relief of their weariness to amusements or to vice out of doors. Abbot John

took the rule as he found it. He could not return to the practice of earlier times. He could not force the community to experience in themselves a revival of spiritual emotion, of which enthusiasm alone makes ordinary temperaments capable; but he could, at least in his own person, set an example which might rouse them to imitation. None were stricter than he in vigils and fasts. He committed the Psalter to memory and repeated it through without book or note. When the convent was sleeping the abbot was on his knees in the oratory, and the drowsy monks dreamt they heard celestial music, as if companies of angels had descended to sing nocturns with him. He lived to be a very old man, and when he came to die at last the singular beauty of his end became part of the traditions of the abbey.

He had studied medicine at Paris, and while in health had watched by many a sick-bed. Knowing by his symptoms that his end was approaching, he called the monks together, crawled into the chapter house, and took his usual seat.

'My dear brethren,' he said, with a faint playfulness, '*Præfui et minus quam decuit profui.* I have been your præfect, but less your profit than I ought to have been. My time is now come. There is not one of us who does not sin and offend in man

things. If I have injured any one among you here, on my knees I beg your forgiveness, and as far as lies in you I desire you to absolve me.' *Fiat ut petistis*, 'Be it as you demand,' they all answered. The abbot then sent for a stool which was called *Judicium*, Anglice 'the flogging-block.' He threw off his gown, leant over it, and bade the brethren each strike him on his bare back. His frame was shrunk—the bones stood out from the shrivelled skin The monks burst into tears, but each approached and did what he desired. They struck lightly—how could they do otherwise? He reproached them for their weakness, crying at every blow, *Confiteor*. *Misereatur Deus!*

The sad ceremony over, an attendant covered his wounded body. He then bade them all farewell, and was assisted back to the infirmary, where, on the hard stones, after receiving the viaticum and extreme unction, *migravit ad Dominum*, he departed to the Lord. [July 17, 1214.]

Beautiful! even if it was all illusion.

Man, it is said, walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain. We know not what we are or what we shall be. Feeling only that all is not as it seems, that within this animal frame there is a something which links us inexplicably to the

mystery of spiritual existence, some few here and there, like Abbot John, have flown to strange remedies to appease the longing of their souls. The enlightened modern smiles with a scorn which he scarce cares to conceal. Yet Abbot John may after all have been nearer the truth than his complacent critic who, in his arm-chair, is satisfied to believe that he is but animated dust, returning, when the pulse ceases to beat, into the clay of which he is composed, and holding it therefore his best wisdom to enjoy such pleasure as he can snatch so long as the life is in him.

II.

Abbot John was almost the last of the genuine monks. His death created a passing emotion—but the age of progress had set in, and reform and new ideas. Very curious is the picture of the convent when Abbot John left it. There was brother John the Proud; brother Almeric the wit; Alexander the orator; Walter de Standen the bullying demagogue. While the late abbot was among them they had formed into a mutinous cabal under a brother William of Trumpington, to agitate for their liberties and their rights. William of Trumpington was now

chosen in Abbot John's place, and a new era set in. Abbot William was *homo sæcularis*—a man of this world, a friend of kings and earls, and a politician. Cloister life and the flogging-block might suit a feeble Abbot John. The new abbot was most at home at princes' banquets and in the cabinets of statesmen. The road down-hill is not at first abrupt. The motion is easy, the alterations not violent enough to shock. Abbot William gained golden opinions. He bought a house and garden in London, *instar magni palatii*, like a great palace, and brethren of the house who had business in the city were allowed to stay there. He set up an establishment at Yarmouth to supply the convent with fish. He acquired fresh lands for the abbey. Religion too (the outside of it) was not neglected. He purchased some precious relics, the cross of St. Amphibalus, stained with the martyr's blood, for one thing, and a rib of St. Wolstan for another. He added two aisles to the church, decorated the windows, raised the towers, and roofed the house with lead. The liberal cabal had lifted him to power to carry out popular ideas. They found, as often happens in such cases, that there is no such despot as a liberal when raised to authority.

Abbot William attended the Council of the

Lateran called by Innocent the Third; he won his way into favour, and when he returned to England had the papal legate as his right hand. Almeric and Walter de Standen clamoured for their privileges again. The abbot invited the legate to St. Alban's, and brought them down upon their knees in shame and discomfiture. Alexander the eloquent paid his court more skilfully, and was at first in favour. Alexander, says the chronicler, was a wonderful man. He knew everything. 'He could write a letter, if necessary, to the Pope himself, and an excellent letter it would be.' He was made keeper of the abbot's seal, and for a time all went well with him. But the old Adam remained. Vanity puffed him up. He, too, grew insolent and mutinous. The abbot had him whipped in the chapter-house, *usque ad copiosam sanguinis effusionem*, 'till his back was bloody;' and then exiled him with fetters on his ankles to Binham Priory, where he died.

The times were stormy. King John and the barons were at war. Pope Innocent had thrown England under an interdict. It was well for St. Alban's that there was a ruler at its head with a clear eye and a firm hand. Abbot William steered his way in those troubled waters without committing himself too dangerously, and, after weathering the

storms, withdrew into a quiet age, and the practice of decorous piety.

Each day when he returned from his walk he brought a troop of beggars with him to be fed. He was always in his place in chapel, said his responses in an audible voice, never missed processions, and even preached at times, to the delight of all who heard him. In all ways, in his vigour and in his decline, Abbot William was a favourable specimen of the great political churchman of the new age. Outwardly decent and decorous—at the bottom he was a statesman and a man of the world, to whom religion had lost its seriousness, and had grown into a dignified and respectable ceremonial.[1]

So rich and so powerful under such administration the abbeys were now becoming, that both kings and

[1] The discipline had undoubtedly by this time been much relaxed again. In repairing the high altar the bones of thirty monks were uncovered which had lain in the earth a hundred years. They were 'as white as ivory and as sweet as incense.' The bodies had been buried in the ordinary dress of the order. The shoes were perfect, and the degenerate brothers of the thirteenth century were put to shame by the contrast with the soft boots which had then come to be allowed. 'How admirable were these fathers of ours!' they sighed. 'How ought we who should be treading in their steps to blush for the delicate garments in which we are rather adorned than clothed! If Benedict could see us now, how would he be offended! If Bernard could see us, —Bernard who wrote that of all objects hateful in God's sight, the hatefullest was a monk with boots on—how would he scold!'

popes began to clutch at a share of their wealth. On the death of an abbot the chapter could only proceed to an election after receiving a *congé d'élire* from the Crown; and the fine exacted by the Treasury had been fixed at not less than a thousand marks—twelve or fifteen thousand pounds of modern English money. The eagerness for the enforcement of discipline which had led the first Norman abbots to part with their exemption and to place the abbey under episcopal jurisdiction had been of brief duration. Bishops, like other dignitaries, were learning to convert their authority into money, and had proved perhaps more covetous than serviceable. The old liberties at any rate had been restored by the Popes; but at the Council of Lateran Pope Innocent had decided that the abbots-elect of the exempt houses should present themselves in person at Rome to receive confirmation, and the meaning of this was that their Holinesses as well as the king intended to have a slice of the plunder. The new rule came into operation on the death of William of Trumpington. John of Hertford, who was chosen in his place, not knowing that it would be construed literally, pleaded advanced age, and sent two of the brethren to represent him. Conjecturing what was wanted, they went with purses well supplied, and at their first interview laid a sum

of money, *pecuniæ quandam summam*, at the Pope's feet. Dominus Papa bade an attendant take it away, but otherwise treated the monks with much superciliousness, and 'did not so much as ask them to dinner.' They bribed the officers about the palace—finding the mouths of these persons wide open gaping for presents (*quia sic oportuit cum patulis rictibus ipsi donis inhiarent*). They assailed the cardinals *donis uberrimis*. The cardinals heard no petitions which came unaccompanied with gold. At length the confirmation was obtained, but attended by a private condition which the Bishop of London imparted to the abbot when the confirmation was sent over. The abbot must still appear at Rome in person within three years, and when he inquired why, the bishop pleasantly answered, '*Amice, ut offeras*,' My friend, that you may make offerings. Remonstrance was useless, resistance was impossible. *Abbas invitus et dolens Romanorum jugum subiit servitutis*. With grief and reluctance the abbot submitted to the yoke of the Roman bondage. And he and each abbot after him was obliged to travel to Italy at a vast expense, and pay the Pope a second thousand marks, besides lavish presents in the sacred college, before their bulls were granted—*in magnum ecclesiæ damnum et gravamen et insatiabilis Romanæ curiæ emolumentum*. 'Much good

too the bulls brought us,' grumbles the chronicler. 'The Pope's arms were set up over our gate, but when a thunder-storm came they did not save us from the lightning. We were struck twice in three years and the house was set on fire.'

Money, in fact—how to get it and who had a right to share it—became the question of chiefest moment in the Church, and the chiefest subject of discussion, from the sacred conclave at Rome to the shaving-houses in abbey and priory. A levy was now, with the sanction of Pope Alexander IV., ordered for a crusade. The religious houses were required to contribute, and after their experience of past crusades expecting small results from another, they drew their purse-strings. Such a demand was unheard of, they said. Hitherto the laymen had paid tithes to the Church. Now churchmen, *et inviti*, against their will, were to furnish money for knights and men-at-arms. The monks were irritated out of all propriety, and the language in which their passion boiled over was more emphatic than decent. The exempt abbots had agreed to resist, and had almost made good their opposition, when a *non nominandus episcopus*, Peter de Egilbanke, Bishop of Hereford, *cujus memoria sulfureum fœtorem exhalat et teterrimum*—whose memory breathes a stink of sul-

phur and abominations—suggested a plan to the Pope by which with a stretch of prerogative he could force them into submission. The Pope raised money from Italian merchants. The names of the exempt abbeys were in some way introduced as securities; and 'these vile extortioners'—the chronicler losing control of his pen—'*quos Franci bugeros vulgariter appellant*,' received powers to distrain upon 'the innocent children of the Church.'

One might have wished the poor monks better fortune, had not their lamentation been so often intercalated with entries recording increased allowances of beef and beer from the kitchen and the buttery-hatch. The 'innocent children,' when the power was theirs, had been distraining also to considerable purpose: squeezed themselves by the Pope, they had in turn squeezed their tenants, and had commenced a system of tyranny which led at last to open insurrection. The common law of England is the creation of custom. The lords of manors, such of them as had courts of their own, were thus allowed in local matters to make the law what they pleased. The Abbot of St. Alban's ruled, in the name of custom, that the inhabitants of the town and of all the neighbouring villages should full their cloth and grind their corn at the abbot's mills, the abbot him-

self fixing the charges which they should be required to pay. The monks were a less venerable body than they had been. The burgesses were growing wealthier and more independent. They questioned the abbot's right to force them. They fulled their cloth where it could be done more cheaply. They set up querns or handmills and ground their wheat in their own houses. The abbot tried violence. The townsmen resisted and carried their cause to the courts at Westminster. An appeal from the decision of their spiritual lord to a secular judge appeared to the monks no better than sacrilege. They tolled their great bell. They walked in procession singing the penitential Psalms and invoking the aid of the blessed Alban. The blessed Alban, or the general sympathy of established authorities with the claims of the lords of manors, determined the decision of the court of appeal, and judgment on all points was given in the abbot's favour. The townsmen had to surrender their querns, and purchase forgiveness by a present of wine. The abbot, in turn, promised moderation in the charges which were to be demanded at his mills.

So the figures pass by on the slide of history as the monastic drama unfolds. Political convulsions tear England in pieces. There are the Barons' wars,

with Simon de Montfort and the first great struggle for political liberty; the monks feeling the disorder of the times, and self-indulgence eating deeper into the conventual rule. Successive bodies of regulations indicate the rising tide of corruption, and the efforts, real or pretended, to keep the water flowing within the banks. Special injunctions become necessary to check incontinence—compelled celibacy producing its inevitable fruits among men who were heavily fed and had no work with which to occupy themselves. Officers are appointed to sleep either in the dormitory or at its door—the brethren having fallen into habits of sitting up at night telling stories, and so being drowsy at matins. The young monks have taken to hunting with 'greyhounds.' The kitchen has to be supplied from the warrens, and running down the deer has proved too agreeable a relief from the monotony of the chapel services. They are ordered to stay at home or confine themselves to permitted modes of 'recreation.' They have been fighting and quarrelling in the town, eating and drinking at ale-houses, 'even in the presence of women.' The sin of possessing a private purse of money has been too much forgotten. The brethren are forbidden to swear *par plagas, per sanguinem nostri Creatoris*—'Zounds' 'Sblood,' 'God's

wounds and God's blood' having passed into their vocabulary. Within the precincts as well as without there is disorder and dissoluteness. Unmentionable vices are alluded to as practised in the sleeping-rooms, as the Norman hand loses its grasp. The enlarged allowances at the buttery create intemperance. On the festivals of the Church the monks are drinking their *pocula charitatis* as long as daylight lasts. In the winter season there is scarce an interval *inter unum potum et alium*—between one drink and another; hence proceeds *Ebrietas quæ per apostolum enumeratur inter opera Turcarum.*

The remedies insisted on are of the mild kind, which indicate that the temper of the times forbade the tightening of the strings. The indulgences which caused the disorder are restrained but not abolished. The *pocula charitatis* are permitted on Sundays as usual. The healthy are directed to be moderate. The infirmary is still a land of plenty. The *pitancia*, 'pittance,' of the sick is to be *bona et fertilis;* they may eat and drink *juxta desiderium suum*, 'as much as they like.' The mischief of idleness is recognized, but the suggested antidotes are too weak for the disease. The brethren are directed to learn by heart the lives of the saints and the abbey chronicles; to study, to transcribe, to illum-

inate, to correct errors in MSS., to bind volumes falling to pieces. Those who are too illiterate are to be set *ad alia opera honesta monasterio magis necessaria*. To make life less dreary and monotonous a second dining-room is established, called the oriel, to which the brethren are to be invited by turns. In the refectory they have to eat in silence while one of them reads an edifying book. In the oriel they may talk and amuse one another: they are required only to abstain *a superfluis potationibus*, from immodest talk, or scandal, or dispute. An indecent joke is punished by exclusion from the oriel for a fortnight.

Thus the monastic world went on, the authorities dreaming feebly that they would arrest the inevitable by laying their little finger on the driving-wheel. Corporations of men are only individuals enlarged. They pass their prime but they are unconscious of the change. At times they have their spasms of misgiving. But they still feel the blood in their veins; they gather what they call experience; and as long as there is no outward collapse they can even believe that they are improving and gaining strength, as common sense takes the place of enthusiasm. Their wealth comforts them, for it is an evidence of growing prosperity; and they boast of progress

though it is a progress towards death. Luxury shows only that they have thrown off the barbarous habits of a less enlightened age, and the powers and privileges which were won by nobler natures for nobler purposes, they imagine that they have only to enjoy in an ornamental manner. Existence on the established terms they find extremely agreeable. They see no reason why they should not continue for ever. At worst the next generation may encounter its own problems. For themselves they are on the primrose path, and dream of nothing so little as the goal to which that path is tending. Later on, when the truth can be no longer concealed, they assume the virtues which they have lost. The tree is dead, the branches are withered, and where leaves will no longer grow they hang artificial sprigs of green; they pretend to a fabric of decency to persuade the world to give them credit for continued life. This is the last stage which precedes the end. But for the monasteries it was yet far off. In England, indeed, they scarcely reached this point, for Henry VIII. cut them down when most of them were in the very blossom of their sins. As yet they had no thought of hypocrisy—or desire to seem other than they were. The inward spirit revealed itself, with happy unconsciousness, in visible shape.

After a series of mild reforms there was elected to St. Alban's, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, 'our late cellarer,' Hugh of Eversden, a typical abbot in his way, on whom we may pause for a moment to look. Abbot Hugh was still a youth when he was chosen, tall, handsome, and, in the modern sense, an accomplished gentleman. He had been a student of English and French literature, *sed parum nactus de Latino*—indifferently provided with Latin. 'You might have chosen a more learned head, my brethren,' he said, when the choice of the convent was made known to him, '*sed pro certo nullum magis socialem*, but assuredly no pleasanter fellow.' Edward I. was dead. The new abbot was the friend and boon companion of Edward of Carnarvon, the slave of parasites and his own folly. The want of Latin mattered little at the Court of Edward; for the necessary journey to Rome it was a more serious deficiency. At the Vatican a prelate of the Church must talk Latin or must hold his tongue; and the Pope might think twice before he granted so illiterate a gentleman his bull of confirmation. Abbot Hugh, like his predecessor John, sent proctors with his excuses. Edward and Edward's favourites wrote in his behalf. He spent enormously:—*expensæ horribiles* went in bribes to the cardinals—*quia nihil*

plus timuit quam Latinam linguam, 'for he feared nothing so much as the Latin tongue.' The cardinals pocketed the money, but the Pope still insisted that to Rome the abbot should go—and to Rome perforce he went. The first business there was to examine into his fitness for the abbacy. As he could ill bear scrutiny he was obliged *examinatores suos emolire, ut mitius agerent cum eodem*—to anoint his examiners' palms, that they might handle him gently. The Virgin Mary he invoked, probably with appeals of the same kind, for on his return he added a Lady Chapel to the abbey church; and a similar golden road he laid down by which to approach his Holiness.

Tam munificum se præbuit Domino Papæ et universæ curiæ ut magnificentiam suam avarissimi hominum prædicarent—so munificent he showed himself to our Lord the Pope, and the curia, that the greediest of the crew were obliged to applaud his generosity. To such an abbot the want of Latin could be pardoned. He was driven to borrow; he had to plunge himself in debt and difficulty; *consolationibus tamen divinis non caruit*—he was not without Divine consolation. The Pope dismissed him with his blessing. Edward of Carnarvon smiled upon him when he came back, and, so long as Edward's sun was shining, 'happy

was the man who could call the Abbot of St. Alban's his friend.' He was modest in his prosperity and shrank from asking favours; but the brethren who had elected him insisted; and *pulsatus hortatu suorum* —he presented himself among the suppliants among whom the royal treasures were being distributed with lavish hand. Edward desired nothing better than to heap favours on his attractive friend. Edward I. had carried through Parliament the famous mortmain statute, which forbade the appropriation of any more English soil in the dead hand of the religious houses. But the lawyers made a way through the Act. Mountains of gold were piled upon St. Alban's; and now began in earnest the erection of those splendid buildings, amidst the ruins of which sentimental ritualists sigh over the ages of faith and pray for their return. Let the ritualist observe a naive confession of the spirit which went along with the architectural efflorescence. When the exquisite Mary Chapel was finished, an extra mass was said there daily for the abbot and the brethren; *et quia temporalis consolatio spiritualem devotionem excitare frequentius consuevit*— and because the consolations of the flesh are often wont to excite spiritual devotion, the officiating brother had an additional allowance assigned him from kitchen and cellar, and was allowed the privi-

leges of the infirmary, to eat and drink *juxta desiderium suum.* With all his magnificence the abbot had his faults. *Dominus Abbas frequenter admittere consuevit familiaritatem damnosam fœminarum.* The lord abbot indulged too frequently in pernicious familiarity with women. Rich as he was, he was embarrassed by his expenditure. The resources of the abbey were exhausted, and he began to pinch and squeeze the dependent priories, till 'he made his name abhorred among them.' At Binham, especially, he was so extortionate that the brothers mutinied. The gentry of the neighbourhood took their part, and the prior, a certain William of Somerton, shut his gates and broke into open revolt. The king came to the abbot's help. The gentry were driven off, the priory was forced, and the monks were made to walk in procession in chains to St. Alban's. The sequel of this adventure was curious. The prior escaped. He too is a characteristic figure. With a mendicant friar for a tutor he had been a student of alchemy, seeking in the universal gold-hunger for the philosopher's stone, and edging into magic. Finding he could not defend his priory, he collected as much treasure as he could carry, fled to Rome, and bestowed it freely in the right quarter. A citation was served in consequence on Abbot Hugh to appear at Rome and

answer for himself. The abbot was acute in his generation. He professed compliance. He set out and had reached Canterbury, where he was overtaken by a writ, which he had himself no doubt secretly procured, reclaiming the cognisance of the cause to the Crown, and forbidding him to plead in a foreign court. The abbot's loyalty was unimpeachable; he pretended, however, that he dared not disobey his spiritual lord. He went on to Dover. As he was stepping on board the packet, he was arrested by the sub-constable of Dover Castle, and submitted with a protest to superior force. *Sic, si dici fas est, miraculose, evasit Dominus Abbas*—thus by miracle, if such a word may be used, the lord abbot escaped.

Somerton, on the abbot's non-appearance, obtained minatory bulls from the Pope, and came over with them to England, disguised as a layman *et sine tonsurâ*. He was discovered in London, seized, and with his papers handed over to the abbot. The abbot threw him into a dungeon. What became of the bulls, *ille cui cognita sunt omnia solus novit*—He only knows from whom nothing is hid.

This was not the end. Somerton's cause was taken up by Edward's disaffected barons, and by Edward's Queen Isabella. The 'she-wolf of France' gave the abbot to understand that he must reconsider

his ways, or it would be the worse for him. Somerton was released and was even replaced in his priory. In a little while he disappeared a second time. Whether, as the chronicler suggests, he had promised rewards to his friends the barons which he could not pay, or whether he had fallen back into magic, no one knew—anyway he absconded; roved about the world; and many years after, when Abbot Hugh had gone to his rest, reappeared as a suppliant at the Abbey gate, to be taken in and to die there. Strange history of a noticeable man! Had William of Somerton written his autobiography, it would tell us more than we know, or are ever likely to know, of the England of the second Edward.

Nor was it with his ecclesiastics only that avaricious ways brought Abbot Hugh into trouble. Since the judgment at Westminster, the relations with the St. Alban's burgesses had gone from bad to worse. The abbots, presuming on their success, had proceeded to enclose large tracts of wood and pasture land, over which the people had hitherto held common rights. Meadows had been fenced off where they had fed their cattle for centuries. The forests were made into game preserves. Ponds and streams where the farm and village lads had caught perch and pike, were now watched over by the abbot's

keepers. So long as the times were quiet they controlled their wrath; but Edward II.'s follies bore at last their natural fruit. He was deposed and murdered in a revolution. The country was in a ferment, and now was the day of vengeance for the inhabitants of St. Alban's. The abbot's patron had fallen, and there was a chance that wrong might be made right.

A.D. 1327. Queen Isabella had borne the chief part in her husband's overthrow. Passing through St. Alban's she rested a night in the abbey. The mob of the town flocked about her carriage as she was driving away clamouring for justice. They had other wrongs to complain of besides the loss of the common lands. The chronicler must tell the story in his own Latin:

Subornaverunt uxores suas et quasdam villæ pellices ut occurrant, nudatis pectoribus cum lactentibus pusiolis, reginæ Isabellæ egredienti de monasterio, ad infestandum eam clamoribus importunis, et mentiendum quod hi essent pueri quos monachi de eis generaverunt eas violenter opprimentes.

The queen, who did not understand English, inquired what the women wanted. A lord who rode at her side said, laughing, 'They are only telling you, my lady, that they are all harlots and adulteresses.'

Isabella waved her hand impatiently and passed

on. The citizens meanwhile, taking revolution to mean justice, proceeded to draw a list of their grievances. As before, they insisted on their right to grind their own corn. They would not wait till it was conceded, but procured dozens of querns and set them to work. They demanded their common rights on meadow, wood, and pond. They claimed their privilege as freemen of returning members to Parliament; and whereas hitherto their disputes had been heard and decided in the first instance in the abbot's courts, they desired that for the future their causes should be tried by a common jury before a secular judge.

A deputation carried these petitions to the abbot. The abbot answering enigmatically, the people snatched their bows and clubs, streamed out of their houses like a swarm of wasps, and swearing their demands should be granted or they would burn the abbey, gathered in a crowd about the gates. The abbot, who had foreseen the probability of a tumult, had two hundred men-at-arms with him. The people rushed on with loud shouts, calling the monks *ribaldos fures*—ribald thieves. They were received more sharply than they expected, drew back with loss, and determined to blockade the entrances and starve the abbot out.

The confusion in London had by this time settled itself. Edward III. was established on the throne, and the laws resumed their authority. The Sheriff of Hertfordshire was directed to keep order in St. Alban's. Both the citizens and the monks sent counsel to represent their case at the king's court. A commission sat at St. Paul's to consider the people's complaints, and, courting popularity for a new reign, decided this time in the people's favour. An order was forthwith despatched to the abbot directing him to embody in a charter the liberties which the townsmen demanded, and to let them have it without further trouble. The abbot called a chapter on the arrival of the king's letter. The monks, who would scarce believe their ears, declared that they would rather die than yield. But the abbot bent to the storm, and made a virtue of necessity It was his enemies' day, and resistance would only exasperate them uselessly. He enjoined the monks to patience —*virtute sanctæ obedientiæ*. The charter was drawn, and amidst groans of disappointed rage the convent seal was attached to it.

Most of the requisitions were thus conceded: the handmills especially, and the pasture rights. The game preserves had still been withheld, but the people were not to be put off. The cry rose: 'Give us back

our fisheries! Give us back Barnet wood! We must have Barnet wood!' 'The Abbot hearing these words, and perpending that the world was at enmity with God's Church and His ministers,' thought it best to bend altogether. At once, mad with delight, the boys dashed off with their nets and lines to the ponds. The men rushed to the woods, tore down the fences, and marched back to the town in procession, carrying branches of the trees as a symbol of their victory.

The convent looked on with despair and indignation. For five years 'these enemies of God and man' killed the hares and rabbits without respect or fear. For five years they ground their corn in their own querns, and paid no more tolls at the abbey mills. It killed Abbot Hugh. He died in the same year, bewildered and heart-broken with the change of times; all his splendour vanished, and his sun gone down in storm. His profusion left a heavy load of debt behind it, and the brethren, humbled and mortified, were brought into a transient mood of penitence. They elected in Abbot Hugh's place a plain, unpretending blacksmith's son from Wallingford, chiefly noted as a mathematician, and they addressed themselves to moral reform. There was a general inquiry into incontinence,—*de lapsu carnis*. Some made their

purgation—*quomodo Deus novit*—God knows how. Others confessed and did penance. They could bear neither their vices nor their remedies. They professed a desire for correction. When correction came they mutinied. 'Abbot Richard was over-rigid with us,' says the chronicler. 'Partly he was himself to blame, partly his predecessor, who had let us all do as we pleased.' The new abbot took their grumbling coolly. 'He had not coveted his place,' he said; 'there was little pleasure in ruling a set of mules; but since abbot he was, he meant to be obeyed, and at least would preserve decency.' They were obliged to bear with him, and he in turn rendered them a service after a few years, which made them forget their grievances.

The abbot, who had begun life, perhaps, at his father's forge at Wallingford, had retained his mechanical tastes. With the help of his mathematics he constructed, amidst the scoffs of the convent, an astronomical clock which was the wonder of the age. Besides the ordinary functions of time-keeping, it described the motions of sun, moon, and planets; the fixed stars; with the rise and fall of the tides. He called it, punningly, Albion—All by one—*quasi totum per unum;*—at once the glory of England and an instrumental embodiment of existing

scientific astronomy. He was a student of the weather, too, and foretold rain and sunshine. But while he appeared to be amusing himself thus harmlessly, he was biding his time to avenge the dishonour which the town had inflicted on the abbey. Among his other accomplishments he was a lawyer. In Edward III. there was again a vigorous sovereign on the throne; revolutionary ferment had cooled down, and the barons were reasserting their feudal authority and bringing their vassals back into obedience.

Between order and liberty the struggle is as old as the world, and is likely to be coeval with it. In ages when belief in duty is superior to the temptations of interest, large powers fall naturally to men of high ability and lofty character. Society is only healthy when the laws are obeyed under which harmonious action is possible. Such laws can only be discerned by intellect; they can only be enforced by authority; and intellect and authority are allowed to govern in the interests of all. Power brings temptation. Rulers are betrayed by selfishness. Their high functions are abused to fill the pockets of themselves and their friends. Authority becomes legalised oppression, and the multitude clamours for the restoration of their liberties, which are taken from them without adequate return. Thus come revolutions and a war

of classes. The rulers fall back upon the theory. Subjects think naturally of the practical wrongs which the theory, grown degenerate, inflicts upon them. And so the strife goes on till organization dissolves into anarchy; the commonwealth becomes a chaos of divided units, each contending for itself: when again, the confusion becoming intolerable, a new order shapes itself, and grows and gathers power; and again, as the wheel goes round, it is abused and forfeited. Of such material is human history composed.

Abbot Richard sat watching the political currents in the intervals of his mathematics. The abbot's courts had still jurisdiction over faith and morals. Corrupt as were the ecclesiastics in their own persons, they retained the right of punishing offences which are technically described as sins. The people, after their late success, believed that the abbot's authority had become a scarecrow which they might defy with impunity, and according to the abbey records they broke faith and perjured themselves, and seduced each other's wives and daughters as if there was no longer any law over them at all. The abbot waited for a flagrant scandal, and then resolved, *se demonstrare cornutum,* 'to show that he had horns.' A citizen of St. Alban's, one John Taverner, was living openly with another man's wife. He was a person

with whom it was dangerous to meddle, *propter malitiam ipsius Johannis.* The abbey marshal ventured at last to serve a writ upon him. The mob rose; Taverner assaulted the marshal; the marshal defended himself, struck Taverner down, killed him, or, as the chronicler mildly puts it, so wounded him *ut de percussionne idem Johannes postea moriebatur*—that the said John did afterward die of the blow. The citizens flew to their weapons—swords, lances, pitchforks, sticks, stones, anything that came to hand. Their leaders calmed their fury before they resorted to open violence, and not knowing that times were changed, they indicted the abbot for the death of their townsman. The wise abbot desired nothing better. He was acquitted, and at once retaliated. The riots at the revolution were brought up again for re-examination. The citizens were accused of having extorted their charter of liberties by force. The judgment of the commission was reversed. The burghers were found guilty, and lost all that they had won. The charter was surrendered. The woods and meadows were reinclosed. The fish-ponds and warrens were again patrolled by keepers. Even the querns, the sorest matter of all, were once more taken from the people. The millstones were carried in triumph within the precincts and were let into the pavement

of the abbey 'parlour,' *in perpetuam rei memoriam.* The cunning clock-maker had re-established the old tyranny, and in pleasant irony, and to end the quarrel in good humour, he invited his defeated subjects to dine with him in the hall. After such a triumph it is needless to say that Abbot Richard's popularity in the convent was unbounded. He became leprous. An enemy, one Richard of Ildesley, intrigued at Rome to have him incapacitated on account of his disorder. The Ildesley intruder gained over the Pope and obtained letters of provisor, nominating him in the abbot's place. The monks sent word to Richard of Ildesley that if he ventured near St. Alban's with bull or provisor they would kill him. And indeed, says the chronicler, it is likely they would have kept their word. *Erant namque eo tempore in monasterio viri magnæ staturæ et fortitudinis sed parvum habentes in hâc parte conscientiæ.*—'There were at that time in the monastery men of huge stature and fierce, who had but little conscience in such matters.'

'Men of huge stature and fierce, but with little conscience' to take life. Let us pause for a moment and look at these gentlemen with other eyes, as they and their like appeared to the English laity. Abbot Richard's reforms had been but skin deep, if they had gone so far; and not at St. Alban's only, but

throughout England, by the middle of the fourteenth century, the religious orders had grown into little better than lecherous ruffians.

The worst of them were the Friars Mendicants, who in conception ought to have been the best. Instituted to supply the shortcomings of the secular clergy, they were bound by their vows to special poverty, and to the special duties of apostles. Their business was to travel from town to town, from village to village, preaching, teaching, and hearing confessions. They were chosen or supposed to be chosen for extraordinary sanctity; and the monks of the regular houses were allowed by special license from Rome to transfer themselves into a mendicant order, as if to consecrate themselves to a higher grade of self-devotion. Enthusiasm, as usual, cooled down, after a few years' experience. The transfer continued to be sought by 'brethren' who were weary of restraint—no longer, however, from motives of piety, but as an act of favour which they could purchase by money. Freed from obligations of residence, these friars wandered through England at their pleasure; in theory beautiful beings—itinerant angels of mercy; in reality—but let us view them as they are described by a contemporary poet, going about with pedlars' packs upon their mules, watching till the good-man

of the house had turned his back and only the women were at home.[1]

Preste ne Monke ne yit Chanoun,
Ne no man of religioun,
Gyfen them so to devocioun
  As done thes holy frers.
For somme gyven them to Chyvalry,
Somme to riote and ribaudery,
Bot ffrers gyven them to grete study,
  And to grete prayers.
Who so kepes their reule all,
  Both in word and dede,
I am full sicker that he shal
  Hav heven bliss to mede.

Men may see by their countenance,
That thai are men of grete penaunce,
And also that their sustynaunce
  Simple is and wayke.
I have lived now fourty yeres,
And fatter men about the neres,
Yet saw I never than are thes frers.
  In countreys wher they raike (wander),
Meteles so megre are thai made,
  And penaunce so puttes them down,
That ichone is an horslade,
  When he shall trusse of town (depart out of town).

* * * *

Thai dele with purses, pynnes and knyves;
With gyrdles, gloves for wenches and wyves.
Bot ever backward the husband thryves,
  Ther thai are haunted tille.
For when the gode man is fro hame,
And the frere comes to our dame,
He spares nauther for sinne ne shame,
  That he ne does his wille:

[1] *Political Songs and Poems*, vol. i. p. 263. Published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls.

If thai no help of housewyves had,
When husbandes are not inne,
The freres welfare were full bad,
For thai should brewe full thynne.

* * * *

Were I a man that hous helde,
If any woman with me dwelde,
There is no frere bot he were gelde,
Should come within my wones,
For may he till a woman wynne,
In priveytie he wyl not blynne,

* * * *

* * * *

Thof he lours under his hode,
With semblaunt quaynte and mylde,
If thou him trust as dos him gode,
By God thou ert begyld.

In another poem, called 'The Complaint of the Ploughman,' there is a picture of the ecclesiastics generally, which the admirers of the ages of faith might be expected to study with advantage, were it not as true to-day as it was three thousand years ago, that 'though you bray the fool in a mortar, yet will not his folly depart from him.'

The priests had the keys of Heaven and were the dispensers of spiritual censures.[1]

That is blessed that they blesse,
And cursed that thai curse woll,
And thus the people thai oppresse
And have their lordships at fulle.

[1] *Political Songs and Poems*, vol. i. p. 308.

And many be merchants of wull,
  And to presse pennies woll come thrall,
The poor people thai all to pull,
  Such false faitours foul them fall.

* * * *

Who so woll prove a testament,
  That is not all worth ten pound,
He shall pay for the parchment,
  The third of the money all round;
Thus the people is raunsaund,
  They say such part to them should apend,
There as they gripen it goeth to ground,
  God for its mercy it amend!

For a simple fornication,
  Twenty shillings he shall pay,
And then shall have an absolution;
  And at the yere usen it forth he may.
Thus they let him go astray,
  They recke not though the soul do brend,
These keepen evil Peters kay,
  And all such shepheards God amend.

For the tithing of a duck,
  Or an apple or an aie (egg),
They make men swere upon a boke,
  Thus they foulen Christes faie,
Such bearen evile heaven kaie,
  They mowen assoile; they mowe shrive,
With mennes wives strongly plaie,
  With true tillers sturt and strive.

At the wrastling and at the wake,
  And chief chantours at the nale (the ale),
Market-beaters and meddling make,
  Hoppen and houten with heve and hale (might and main),
At faire fresh and at wine stale,
  Dine and drink and make debate,
The seven sacraments set a saile,
  How kepe such the keys of Heaven gate.

Though a Priest lye with his lemman all night,
And tellen his felow and he him,
He goeth to Masse anon right
And saieth he singeth out of sinne :
His bride abydeth him at his Inne,
And dighteth his dinner the mean while,
He singeth his Masse for he would winne,
And so he weneth God begile.

Many a page might be filled with similar humorous denunciations against these so-called ministers of God, as they existed in the days of the third Edward. Within the abbeys and without the story was the same, for the monks went and came at their pleasure, while the rules hung idle upon the wall as relics of a barbarous age.

Out of this mass of corruption and tyranny came Wickliffe and the famous Lollards. Out of this came the great rising of the Commons under Richard II., half religious and half secular, which was crushed at last by sword and gallows, but not till it had shaken the English throne, and frightened the Church into a galvanic revival, which prolonged its sickly days for another century and a half. Part religious, part secular,—for amidst the outward splendour of the reign of Edward III. there had flowed over England one of those periodic tides of ungodliness which have recurred again and again, and have been the invariable precursors of convulsion. Prelates and nobles

had abandoned themselves to luxury; men of intellect, in natural cynicism, had come to look on religion as an imposture, and on God and another world as a dream of knaves and fools.[1] Wages were ground down, and the taxes and exactions multiplied; trade became dishonest; false wares were passed off for good, and were forced on the workmen in payment of hire. The world was the rich man's world, and the poor were bade scornfully look for better days in heaven, which might be or might not be.

> The poor had the labour, the ryche the winning,
> This according noughte it was heavy parting.

Little can be said in this place of the spiritual side of Wickliffe's teaching. The movement began in indignation at lies and injustice; and the revival of earnestness was accompanied with a furious spirit of political revolt. Inquiries, ominous, and at such times inevitable, began to be made into the principles on which the good things of the world were distributed. Discussion rose as to the elemental rights of man, and as the result of them there was an explosion of communism. Labour only, it was said, gave

[1] F. Walsingham, speculating on the causes of the rebellion of 1381, says some attributed it to the sins of the nobles: 'quidam illorum credebant (ut asseritur) nullum Deum esse, nihil esse sacramentum altaris, nullam post mortem resurrectionem, sed ut jumentum moritur ita hominem finire.' —*Historia Anglicana*, vol. ii. p. 12.

a right to live, and those who were doing no intelligible work were denounced as thieves and drones.

It is to this, which is known in history as Wat Tyler's Rebellion, that we are now coming. The feuds between the Abbots of St. Alban's and the neighbouring people were typical of similar quarrels in every part of England. The same causes produced the same effects. But St. Alban's fell in for an exceptional share of the danger; and the account of what took place there is especially interesting and instructive.

III.

The English peasantry and the smaller tenants were as yet, it is to be remembered, only partially emancipated. Serfdom and villanage were still parts of the Constitution. 'There was an usage in England,' says Froissart, speaking of this particular time, 'that the noblemen had great franchise over the commons, and kept them in servage: that is to say, their tenants ought by custom to labour the lords' lands, to gather and bring home their corn, and some to thresh and fan; and by servage to make their hay and hew their wood and bring it home. All these things they ought to do by servage; and there are

more of these people in England than in any other realm, and the noblemen and prelates were served by them. These unhappy people began to stir because they said they were kept in servage, and in the beginning of the world they said there were no bondsmen. They were men formed to the similitude of their lords; why should they be kept so under like beasts? the which they said they would no longer suffer; for they would be all one; and if they laboured or did anything for their lords, they would have wages therefor as well as others.'

'When the people complain,' said a wise man, 'the people are always right.' The long-suffering of the poor under the inequalities of fortune is a phenomenon which, as long as it lasts, shows that the spring of all the virtues which have at any time done honour to humanity is still flowing among us. Cold, hunger, nakedness—they bear them all with preternatural patience. Even injustice they endure till it becomes insolent. So long as masters condescend to be courteous, the drudges of society accept their inferiority, and honour and respect those whom Providence seems to have set over them. Only when the human relations are at an end, when they find themselves treated as if they were made of other clay, as if they were machines to extract wealth from

the soil, and were rewarded sufficiently in being permitted to exist—only then they begin to ask the meaning of the word gentleman, and for what purpose the lord and lady are robed in silks and housed in palaces, while the peasant does the work, shivers in soiled fustian, and is worse lodged than his employer's cattle.

The abbot whose fate it was to encounter the skirts of the storm as it swept over Hertfordshire was Thomas de la Mare, son of a distinguished soldier, Sir John de la Mare, who had fought in the French wars. Thomas, who was a younger child and a boy of great personal beauty, was entered at St. Alban's at his own desire under Abbot Hugh. Rising rapidly through the inferior offices, he was sent, while still young, into Northumberland to govern the dependent Priory of Tynemouth, and while there became intimate with the great family of the Percies. In 1369 he was promoted to the rule of the abbey. He had the usual experiences at Rome. The Popes, whether infallible or not, have been at least homogeneous. 'The sums,' writes Walsingham, himself a monk at St. Alban's and the abbot's biographer, 'the sums which Abbot Thomas spent at Rome would have been incredible, *nisi nota fuit omnibus avaritia ejusdem curiæ*—had not the avarice of the Papal court been

so notorious.' Cupidity grew by what it fed on. The fees for St. Alban's having been paid, a second charge was presented for the vacancy which the abbot had made at Tynemouth. It was without precedent: but the Pope threatened if the claim was resisted to appoint to Tynemouth himself by Provisor. *Fusa est immensa pecunia*—an immense sum of money had to go before the matter could be settled. But the abbot was firm, and at last, *servatus est locus ille a prædationibus Harpyiarum*—the priory was rescued from the Harpies' claws. Nothing can show more clearly than these words of Walsingham the real attitude of the Church of England towards its Italian head. The statute of Provisors, which was passed shortly after, to put an end to such exactions, was no more than a formal expression of resentment on the part of the clergy at a system of unendurable extortion.

New brooms sweep clean. Abbot Thomas, like most of his predecessors, began with attempts at reformation. He perhaps succeeded unusually well, for Edward III. employed him soon after to visit other abbeys which were under Crown jurisdiction, *ad reformandam religionem pæne collapsam in magnis monasteriis*—to restore religion, which in the large monasteries had almost fallen to ruin. The abbeys of

Abingdon, Battle, and Reading were purged of gross scandals. The Abbot of Chester, who was exceptionally vicious, was deposed from office. Reforms, however, when institutions are worn out, are like the patch of new cloth on an old garment. The monks were so little used to discipline that they could not or would not bear it. Of the younger brethren many apostatised, deserted their order, and returned to the world.[1]

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[1] *Note.* Some of them went in search of a purer life than could be found in the abbeys, and therefore fiercely repudiated the charge of 'Apostasy.'

'Full wisely' (says one of these runaways)
'Can they preach and say,
But as thai preche no thing do thai.
I was frere full many a day,
Therefore the sothe I wot (the truth I know)
But when I saw that thair lyvyng
Acordyd not to thair preching,
Off I cast my frere clothyng,
And wyghtly went my gate;
Other leve ne took I none
Fro ham (them) whan I went,
But toke ham to the devel yehone
The prior and the covent.

'Out of the order thof I be gone,
Apostata ne am I none.
Of twelve months me wanted one,
And odd days nine or ten,
Away to wend I made me boun
Or tyme came of professioun.
I went my way throughout the town
In sight of many men,

Some became soldiers, betaking themselves *ad res bellicas et armorum strepitus.* Others (Pope Urban VI. being known to be in want of funds) sent money to Rome, *ubi cognoscebant omnia fore venalia,* and purchased their emancipation and admission among the secular clergy. The abbot, *vir magnanimus et cordatus,* drifted on as he could through his difficulties. When in extremity, *fudit se ante corpus Dominicum vel corpus beati Albani*—he threw himself before the wafer or the body of the blessed Alban, and never rose till one or the other had promised to help him. If he could not manage his monks he could at least fight for the abbey's rights and do battle with his dependent knights and tenantry. Never had any abbot been more litigious than Thomas de la Mare. Half his life was spent in law-suits or distraining for his rents, driving his neighbours' cattle and starving them in his pounds. His high-handed ways answered with him; suit after suit he won. Fiery gentlemen swore revenge: they threatened to make the abbot pay for his oppression even if the lead had to be stripped from the abbey roof—but Thomas de la Mare held on, and

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And God that with paynes ille
Mankynd bought so dere
Let never man after me have wille
For to make him frere.'

the courts at Westminster remained steadily his friends.

Under such a ruler the warren rights and fishing rights were upheld in all their stringency. Woe to the stray cow or horse that trespassed on the appropriated meadows once common to the town; woe to the luckless boy who snared a rabbit, or to the youth who sent a cross-bow bolt through a fat buck which had come out in the moonlight to feed. Jealously every sack of wheat was carried to the abbey mills. The stones of the handmills preached from the *parlour* pavement the story of the townsmen's defeat, and warned them against further resistance.

A few detailed instances of the abbot's proceedings show with painful clearness how little yet was known in English law of the elementary principles of justice.

A claim for eighty shillings was presented against Nicholas Tybbeson, one of the abbey tenants. Tybbeson disputed the debt. The abbot's servants beat him, wounded him, shut him up in a dungeon till he paid the money. Tybbeson sued the abbot for assault and wrongful imprisonment. The abbot pleaded that Tybbeson was his born 'bondman,' and was therefore not entitled to be heard against his superior lord. The court ruled that the abbot was right. The

complaint was dismissed, and the unlucky 'villain' was further fined *pro falso clamore*, for bringing a false accusation.

The rule held throughout. In theory 'villains' were entitled to protection from the law. In practice they found little. The abbot pretended that another tenant, John Albyn, of Winslow, a substantial farmer, owed him money. The debt was disputed, the abbot invaded him with a party of archers, broke into his yard, destroyed forty pounds' worth of property, and carried off a bull and twenty cows. Albyn brought an action against the abbot at the Hertford assizes. The abbot pleaded as before that Albyn was *villanus suus;* and it was sufficient answer—the plea was allowed.

Imagine all over England the lords of manors, secular and spiritual, carrying matters at this high rate; the knights and barons, some of them suspected of atheism, dining, drinking, hunting, and amusing themselves—squeezing their tenants at their pleasure, with the law ready-made at their backs;—the religious houses cruel as the lay lords, yet the members of them seen rollicking at fairs, haunting brothels and ale-houses, fighting, swearing, seducing honest men's wives; the world given over to blackguardism, and the clergy standing in the first rank of Satan's

army. It was past bearing. Edward III. died, watched over in his death-bed by his concubine.[1] The

[1] Alice Perrers. But the story of this lady's relations with Edward III. has been accepted with too little inquiry. The authority is Walsingham, who describes her as *pellex*, *infanda meretrix*, a vile woman who acquired an influence over the king when in his dotage, and heartlessly robbed him of his rings when he was on his death-bed. The scene has formed a favourite subject for moralising historians, who would have been better employed in examining the circumstances. The witness to the theft was a priest, who, Walsingham says, was the only other person present. But was it a theft? The king was alive and conscious. It may have been a parting gift. Who was the lady? and was she the king's concubine at all?

Lady Alice Perrers was the daughter of Sir Richard Perrers, a gentleman of fortune in Hertfordshire. She was the wife of Lord Windsor, a nobleman attached to Edward's person, who had been a distinguished viceroy in Ireland. Her family had for many years been involved in angry law-suits with the Abbot of St. Alban's; and long after this affair, which Walsingham describes so rhetorically, we find her still a great lady, her father's heiress, carrying on the controversy with the abbey. She was evidently regarded there with bitter personal hostility, and charges from that quarter require to be scrutinised.

Turning now to other evidence against her, we find from the Rolls of Parliament that she was complained of by the Legislature as presuming on the king's favour to interfere in the business of the courts of law. Although there is no hint in the Rolls that she was the king's mistress, the complaint has appeared to harmonise so well with Walsingham's charge as at least to confirm it.

The Speaker of the House of Commons, however, who presented the charge (*qui hæc universa proposuit*), was Peter de la Mare, the abbot's brother or cousin; and thus again there is a suggestion of personal motive. The particulars when looked into amount to no more than this: Lord Windsor was a favourite with Edward, and an object of jealousy both with other noblemen and with the popular party in Parliament. A hostile commission was to be appointed to inquire into Lord Windsor's conduct in Ireland. Lady Alice, who may have been a favourite with the king also without being

Black Prince, the best hope of loyal men, had gone a few months before him. The crown fell to Richard of Bourdeaux, a boy of eleven. The reins fell loose on the horses' necks, and authority was dead. A priest named John Ball, said to be infected with Wickliffe's heresies—infected at any rate with impatience of wrong-dealing, and with visions of the *Contrat Social*—had been preaching for twenty years to the peasantry of Kent, on the brotherhood of mankind. Injustice in England has rarely taken the form of repression of free speech. Among us the origin of injustice has been excess of liberty, and the right, real or supposed, of every man to do as he wills with his own. As long as the rich can fill their pockets, they make a conscience of leaving the poor to talk. John Ball had taught liberty, equality, and fraternity with little interruption from authority. All mankind, he said, have descended from the original gardener and his wife.

> Whan Adam dalf and Eve span,
> Wo was thanne a gentleman?

As nature meant it, those only were noble who were

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a concubine, interceded with him successfully in her husband's defence to prevent his being sacrificed to his enemies.

Edward III. is one of our great English sovereigns. He was sixty-five at the time when this *liaison* is supposed to have taken place; and I decline, without better reason, to receive a story as proved which throws a stain of dishonour on his end.

good. Those only were slaves who were slaves of sin. 'It would never be merry in England till there were no bondmen and no gentlemen,' but all shared together as children of their common parent.

Such doctrines found willing hearers. The people followed John Ball in crowds through field and market-place. He would catch them as they came on Sundays from mass in Canterbury Cathedral, and finish the service with a political sermon. Respectable gentlemen denounced him to the archbishop as dangerous to the State. The archbishop sent for him more than once, lectured him on his imprudence, and shut him up for a month or two, but to little purpose. He was urged to hang him, but 'had conscience to let him die.' In the summer of 1381, the period at which we have now arrived, Ball was for a third time in the archbishop's house of correction. The air was electric. Wickliffe was preaching at Oxford. Chaucer and Gower were in the meridian of their fame. English intellect was in full activity. But no outward signs portended immediate disturbance.

King Richard was then fifteen years old. A heavy tax had been granted by Parliament. The commons, stripped bare already by priest and baron, were slow to pay, and Crown officers had been sent about the country to lay on pressure. Local quarrels, breaking

out at twenty places at once, kindled into a universal conflagration. Kent, Essex, and the eastern counties rose simultaneously to make an end of serfdom.

Sixty thousand men with pikes and pitchforks set out to march on London, to demand redress of grievances. The London mob, they had reason to know, were of the same mind as themselves, and were ready to receive them as friends. Their leaders were a second priest, named Jaques or Jack Straw, and a man described by Walsingham as *vir versutus et magno sensu præditus*—of strong sense and talent, named Walter or Wat Tyler, 'who was indeed a tyler of houses.'[1] Their first step was to break open the archbishop's prison and release Ball, and with these three at their head the insurgents pursued their way.

It was not an age of newspapers or public meetings, popular debating assemblies, or stump oratory. When the people rose they rose meaning business, in a temper which was the bursting of pent and smothered fury.

Instinct pointed out to them their worst and immediate enemy. It was the lawyer who had ruled that 'a villain' could not sue his lord. It was the lawyer's parchment by which the tenantry were held

[1] One of the collectors had offered a gross insult to Tyler's daughter. Tyler struck him on the head on the spot and killed him.

as chattels,—part and parcel of the soil. It was the lawyer again who lay in watch for them like some wild beast, dragging them through king's court, bishop's court, or abbot's court, serving writs upon them for any trifling oath or hasty sin, or enforcing dues and fines at the pleasure of the manorial chief.

Pinched, ground, and starved as they had been in the name of law, they fell at once on the instruments of their oppression.

'Let us hang all lawyers,' was the cry which Shakespeare places on their lips in describing the later insurrection of Jack Cade, and Cade is made to answer:

'Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment—that parchment scribbled over should undo a man?'

Shakespeare in his account of Cade was but translating (though giving life by his own touch to the

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[1] The exactions of the spiritual courts were peculiarly hateful.

The king taxeth not his men
But by assent of the comminalte,
But these each yeare will ransoum them,
Maisterfully more than doth he.
Her seales each yeare better be
Than is the king's in extend,
Her officers have greater fee,
But this mischef God amend.

[Complaint of the Ploughman. *Political Songs and Poems*, vol. i. p. 323.]

dead words) from the Monk Walsingham's history of the earlier rebellion of 1381. In those inarticulate days passion turned instantly to act. With a sharp axe (hanging had not yet come into fashion) the Kent insurgents chopped off the heads of every judge, lawyer, or lawyer's clerk that they could catch upon their march. To be able to write was sufficient evidence of guilt.

'Dost thou use to write thy name?' says Cade to a clerk who was brought before him with his implements in his satchel, 'or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest, plain-dealing man?'

'I thank God,' the clerk answers, 'I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.'

'Away with him,' cry the mob, 'he hath confessed.' 'Away with him,' says Cade. 'Hang him up with his pen and inkhorn about his neck.'

This is no more than a paraphrase from Walsingham. *Periculosum erat agnosci pro clerico, sed multo periculosius si ad latus alicujus atramentarium inventum fuisset. Nam tales vix aut nunquam ab eorum manibus evaserunt.*

The abbeys and manor-houses on their route were broken open and sacked. The muniment chests were searched, and every roll and deed was taken out and burnt.

Then gathering frenzy and growing savage with the taste of blood, the wild army swept on over Blackheath to London Bridge. The city had risen as they expected at the news of their approach. The counties to the west and south had taken fire, and troops of villagers were streaming up along the road from Hertfordshire and Bucks. The gentlemen, fluttered and helpless, gathered into small knots for self-protection, but, without orders from the Court, knew not which way to turn. The gates on the bridge had been closed; but they were opened by the mob from within. Peasants and citizens flung themselves into each others' arms; and London and all that it contained lay at the mercy of a hundred thousand madmen.

It was Corpus Christi day, the 13th of June, when Wat Tyler entered the city. The enormous multitude was parted into three divisions. Jack Straw made his head-quarters at Highbury Barn, outside the walls, on the North Road. Half the rest seized Tower Hill. The others lay at Mile End, at the head of Whitechapel Road.

With method in their fury they sent separate detachments on the work of destruction. The king, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was Lord Chancellor, Sir Nicholas Walworth the Mayor of

London, the Earls of Salisbury, Warwick, and Suffolk, had shut themselves into the Tower without attempting resistance. Still aiming at the lawyers, the people attacked the Temple and burnt it, with the records which it contained.[1] They proceeded next to destroy the Savoy Palace belonging to the Duke of Lancaster, the most beautiful house in England, and afterwards the Hospital of the Knights of Rhodes, the bloody axe beating time to their march, and every supposed enemy of popular rights that was unable to escape being dragged to the block.

Another section attacked Lombard Street. There dwelt the bankers, the Flemish merchants, the money-lenders, those who fixed the rate of interest and were the representatives of the usurers, who took advantage of the poor man's necessities and ground him to grist in their mills. On these poor wretches wild vengeance alighted; scaffolds were extemporised in the streets, and their bloody heads rolled in the kennels.

'So the ungracious people demeaned themselves like men enraged and wode (mad), and did much sorrow in London.'

The fury waxed through all that midsummer day,

[1] Ubi plura munimenta quæ juridici in custodiâ habuerunt igne consumpta sunt.

Thursday, the 13th of June. In the evening the tide rolled up against the Tower. All night it raged about the gates—a crowd of furious men crying for the king, swearing they would not go till they had the king at their pleasure, and till they brought to his account the head of the legal profession in England, the Archbishop-Chancellor, Simon of Sudbury. Unhappy Archbishop Simon! not specially guilty above other chancellors, judges, magistrates, officers of an unjust law; but having the bad luck to be the foremost representative of all the heedless wrong which had been heaped for generations on the back of the English commons, at an hour when authority was struck down, and the forces of nature had broken loose to bring all these things to judgment.

Inside the Tower there were 1200 soldiers besides the retinues of the king and the nobles. Walworth the Mayor proposed a night-sally on the half-armed, half-drunken mass of howling frenzy. A few determined men might slay the rebels in their sleep—slay them, as was said, 'like fleas.' What more horrible than a murdering crowd of maniacs! What more likely than that London itself might perish, as the Savoy Palace had perished, unless order dared to assert itself? Blood enough was on the hands of the miserable wretches. Little cause might a brave

magistrate have seen to hesitate. But behind the mob lay the crimes which had kindled the conflagration and unnerved the hands of the saviours of society. 'The Earl of Salisbury and the wise men about the king said, "Sir, if we can appease them with fairness it were best and most profitable, and to grant them all that they desire; for if we should begin a thing which we could not achieve we should never recover it again, but we and our heirs ever to be disinherited."'

The earl's 'counsel was taken.' Another victim, the most innocent and the most illustrious, was yet necessary before the plague could be stayed. As day broke the mob again roused themselves to action. Dark gangs of workmen swarmed about the Tower archway, while a yell rose from sixty thousand throats, 'Bring out the Archbishop.' The gates were opened and the human torrent poured through them. The men-at-arms stood in files with their halberts and battle-axes, but with orders not to resist, and 'more dead than alive.' Horny hands caught the knights by their beards and stroked them. Artisans in their greasy jerkins surged into the royal apartments, flung themselves into the satin chairs and rolled on the velvet counterpanes. The Princess of Wales, the king's mother, was there. Some work-

man or practical preacher of equality begged a kiss from her. But for the present at least the people meant no hurt to her or the king. The cry was still for the traitor prelate, the oppressor of the commons. Where was he? They seized a servant in the archbishop's livery, a dagger was held at his heart, and he was told to lead them to his master's hiding-place. He brought them to the vaulted chapel in the central tower, where the old man was kneeling before the altar, foreseeing his fate, and impatient to have the business over, *moras eorum arguens.*

He rose to meet them. 'Welcome, my children!' he said; 'I am he that you seek, though no traitor and no oppressor.' They rushed upon him. His chaplain held up the Corpus Dominicum. They flung him aside and dragged their prisoner unresisting across the court, and through the Tower gates to Tower Hill. As he appeared there rose a yell from the crowd not like any human shout, but like 'a scream from Satan's peacocks'—*vocibus pavonum diabolicis*—swords flashed over his venerable head. 'What means this?' he said. 'What have I done? If you kill me, the Pope will lay you under an interdict.'

'Pope and interdict go to their own place,' was the answer. 'Thou art a false traitor. Lay down

thy head.' The archbishop was most eloquent—eloquent, it was said, above all Englishmen of his day. He pleaded hard, but it availed nothing. A ruffian struck at him. 'Ah, ah,' he cried, putting his hand to the wound in his neck, 'it is the hand of the Lord.' The next stroke severed his fingers and cut an artery. At last, with eight blows they hacked the head from the body, and left him in dust and blood.

IV.

The story now returns to St. Alban's, where we left the townsfolk and the abbey tenants smarting under the hands of Abbot Thomas de la Mare. The news of the insurrection shot through the midland counties. The passionate cry was heard everywhere that serfdom and villanage were at an end—Englishmen were to receive at last their eternal birthright of freedom.

On the same Corpus Christi day, the 13th of June, on which Wat Tyler entered London, companies of men came trooping into St. Albans, old and young, horse and foot, from the neighbouring towns. They were received with shouts of welcome, and *quia totum genus humanum pro majori parte ad malum citius quam*

in bonum semper est proclivum, peasants, farmers, burgesses at once addressed themselves to the abbey to demand their liberties once more. Dusty messengers were following one another from London, some from Wat inviting the commons of Hertfordshire to his standard; some to tell the abbot that London was in the insurgents' hands. The abbot proposed that a joint deputation should go up and learn the king's pleasure; what the king should order, he said, that he was ready to do. The leader of the St. Alban's rising was a burgess named William Grindcobbe,[1] who had been educated at the abbey school. His experience of the monks, either then or afterwards, had not disposed him to look favourably on them, and the dislike was mutual. There had been a quarrel between the abbey and the town about the limits of the abbey precincts. Grindcobbe's house, it was pretended, encroached on the abbot's premises. The abbot had sent officials to inspect; Grindcobbe had beaten them, and had been excommunicated in consequence, and been compelled to do penance naked in the presence of the assembled convent. It was now Grindcobbe's turn. The required respite was conceded, and the

[1] Patriotism ran in the family. The name of another Grindcobbe appears on the charter granted by Abbot Hugh, among the signature of the burgesses.

next morning (Friday, the day of the archbishop's murder) he started with a few hundred of his best-armed followers to see how matters were going. He found Wat holding his ragged court at Mile End. The king, despairing of immediate assistance, had conceded every request that was presented to him. He had abolished serfdom so far as an act of the Crown could abolish it. He had granted charters to all who asked for them. He had pardoned all the murderers. In a word, the English peasantry were free, and multitudes of the country-people, supposing their object gained, were trailing back to their homes. Wat himself, who knew the difference between paper grants and real victories, intended to take more substantial guarantees, and had determined to remain till he got them. It may be that he had views for himself too. For a leader who had climbed to so high an eminence, there was no easy or safe descent. Grindcobbe was admitted to an interview, and told the story of the abbot of St. Alban's misdoings. Wat sent him on to Richard. The king gave him a letter to the abbot, and promised, as he was pressing to be gone, to send a charter after him. Wat undertook to see that the promise should be kept, and bade Grindcobbe return in peace and tell the abbot that unless justice was done immediately he would go to

St. Alban's himself with twenty thousand men and shave the monks' beards for them. With this message, and the king's promise, Grindcobbe rode back in the gloaming. The news of the murder of the archbishop in the morning had gone before him. The prior who managed the estates, and knew himself to be specially hated, seeing how things were going, had slipped out at a postern with his attorney and his clerks, and had ridden for his life to the North.

The following morning, Saturday, June 15, St. Alban's was early astir to assert its regained rights. Every gentleman and commoner residing within the liberties of the abbey had been ordered by the delegates of the people to attend on pain of death. So had commanded Wat Tyler, champion of England's freedom. The inhabitants marshalled in procession, moved once more upon the detested fences which shut them out from their woods and meadows. Swearing first a solemn oath to stand by each other, they levelled the walls and paling. A rabbit starting from its seat among them, they speared it, carried it on a lance-point into the market-place, and set it up there as a symbol of free warren. 'Wherefore,' comments the chronicler, characteristically, 'because they had infringed Christ's patrimony their leaders were after-

wards dragged over those meadows and through those woods, and then hanged according to their demerits, as shall be hereafter told.'

Christ's patrimony was the abbot's game preserve; so thought the monk Thomas of Walsingham. Under such convictions are serious, well-intentioned men permitted to live and act, and sow the seeds of revolutions to come, as history has also to tell.

The impaled rabbit thus being duly set on high, Grindcobbe led his company to the abbey once more. The abbot's order was to make no resistance, and to leave the gate open. The first step was to break the door of the abbey jail and release the prisoners. Most of them probably were, like Nicholas Tybbeson, confined for non-payment of questionable exactions. One unhappy wretch, for an unnamed reason, perhaps because he was a real criminal, who had claimed benefit of clergy, the mob decided to lynch. A block and axe were extemporised—they struck his head off under the abbot's windows and set it beside the rabbit's. So far they had gone when a horn was heard, and a company of horse galloped up with the royal standard flying. It was Richard of Wallingford, one of the chief burgesses, who had accompanied Grindcobbe to London the day before, and had been left

behind to receive the king's letter, which he was now bringing with him. The standard was planted; the people were directed to remain by it, and Grindcobbe, Richard, and other delegates, entered the church and sent to the abbot to come to them.

The abbot had been sitting in sad chapter with the convent. He had said that he would rather die than yield the Church's rights. The brethren had told him that his death would not help the situation. The people would either have their way or would kill them all and burn the abbey. Thus pressed, the abbot repaired to the insurgent leaders. Richard of Wallingford placed in his hand a command from the king to restore the charters which had been granted by Abbot Hugh; to grant a complete release of all rights over wood and meadow; all rights of corn-mill and fulling-mill, *ceo que lei et reson le requeront*—as law and reason required. This done, all grudges should be thenceforth removed.

The abbot said, feebly, that although it was true his predecessors had granted such a charter, it had been afterwards surrendered.

Richard of Wallingford answered that times were changed. The people were now masters, and the people meant to have their way. 'There stand,' he

continued, as he saw the abbot still hesitating, 'a thousand men before your gate waiting your answer. Either yield, or we send word to Wat Tyler, who will burn your abbey to the ground.'

'Alas! alas!' exclaimed the abbot. 'For these thirty-two years I have been your father. I have injured none of you; and now without cause will you destroy your kind master?'

It was to no purpose. Richard of Wallingford said he must have a yes or no.

The abbot *librans pericula* yielded. He gave up the charters, and certain bonds with them into which the burgesses had entered to submit for the future. The bonds were carried off and burnt at the market-cross under the rabbit's and the prisoner's head. Another charter was promised *de libertatibus villanorum*, setting the 'villains' free. One more piece of justice, this time an innocent one, the people executed for themselves. The millstones in the floor of the 'parlour' were torn up and broken, and the fragments distributed through the town 'as if they had been pieces of holy bread.'

The abbey was now left to itself. The citizens withdrew. The monks went to dinner, which they ate in sorrow, 'mixing their meat with tears and their drink with lamentations.' Here was a change.

Richard the clock-maker's work all undone again. The master down, the servants up, the abbey likely to be burnt, and their very lives in the hands of clowns. At night the mob were at the gates again crying for the promised emancipation charter. Five hundred peasants bivouacked under the walls, threatening to break in at any moment, and were only kept in good humour by bread and beer from the buttery. All persons who had claims on the abbey were invited to bring them in for settlement. 'An abbey tenant, who himself owed us money, came and demanded a hundred marks, of which he said the prior had robbed him. The wretch at last accepted twenty pounds, saying he would gladly lose all if he could but catch the prior and settle scores with him.'

The night wore away in misery. The monks were meditating flight and meant to be off in the morning. The day, when it came, brought news that the tide had turned.

Not this time, nor for many an age to come, was England to be a commonwealth after Wat Tyler's pattern. Commonwealth indeed on such terms it could never be, but only a pile of units without power or coherence, ready at the first blast of wind to be scattered like dust. It would be no very excellent England when a Wat Tyler's or a Cade's

mouth was to be its parliament.[1] This, and all nations which deserve the name, can exist only where there is settled order and settled rule, and where fools and knaves submit to let wise men guide them; yet with this condition also laid down in the Eternal Statute-Book, that the wise shall also be just,—or red republics will rise and again rise, and mad socialisms, and reigns of terror, and archbishops must be shot on barricades, or have their heads hacked from their shoulders by the swords of clowns.

Wat Tyler's work was done. The bloody lesson had been read, and a small step gained for suffering mankind. Nature or destiny was for the time satisfied, and the tools with which she had worked were flung away.

This same Saturday morning, Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and Ball lay with twenty thousand of their followers in Smithfield. They were meditating, it was said, a general confiscation of property. London was to be plundered and the spoil divided. The

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[1] 'DICK.—I have a suit to your lordship: that the laws of England may come out of your mouth.

'CADE.—I have thought upon it. It shall be so. Burn all the records of the realm. "My mouth shall be the parliament of England."'

Wat Tyler declared, says Walsingham, 'that all things should be in common, and the laws should come out of his lips.'

king's person was then to be secured, and the new triumvirs were to govern England in his name on communist principles. Richard—so the story goes—was intending to escape, if possible, from London, and with the mayor and forty gentlemen about him left the Tower and rode past the skirts of the mob. If he had really meant to fly, it is singular that he should have chosen the route which exposed him most certainly to interruption. At all events he appeared in Smithfield. Wat Tyler, on horseback, placed himself in the king's path, struck at one of the equerries, Sir John Newton, and then insolently addressed the king. Walworth, the mayor, coming up at the moment with a party of horse, rode in upon the rebel leader and bore him to the ground. One of the king's attendants sprung off and ran him through the body with his sword, and at once all was confusion. Wat Tyler had been the life of the insurgents. The sudden blow upon the head stunned and stupefied them. Other parties of gentlemen with armed servants were riding in from the cross streets, likely enough with preconcerted purpose. The king, with a courage which promised a better future for him than he lived to realize, rode forward and spoke with address and presence of mind. He renewed his promise of emancipation, with pardon

for all that had passed. The crowd melted away. The two priests went off with the rest. Ball was immediately taken. Jack Straw escaped into the eastern counties.

It was now the turn of the ruling powers. Promises freely given might require to be observed. Promises made to rebels in arms were binding only while the force which extorted them remained. Walworth, with the city guard, seized such straggling wretches as had been left behind and struck their heads off. Knights and barons came up with their followers in haste from the country, to prevent the disgrace of the Crown and to 'save society.' In four days the king had 40,000 men-at-arms about him. Justice was not allowed to linger. A special commission was appointed to try offenders, and Richard, with Chief-Justice Tressilian, went down into Kent to hold his court. The miserable people inquired with wonder if they were in a dream. 'Had they not been promised pardon and promised freedom?' *Rustici fuistis et estis,* the king replied—'Clowns ye have been, and clowns ye are. *In bondagio permanebitis, non ut hactenus, sed incomparabiliter viliori*—In your bondage ye shall remain; not as heretofore, but infinitely worse. So long as I live and reign I will make you an example to future ages.'

'My father chastised you with whips, and I will chastise you with scorpions.' So answered a foolish Hebrew king, and lost an empire for his pains. So often answer the rulers of this world in the pride of their power. But there is a higher power in nature which will not be so answered—as Richard found when Henry of Lancaster hurled him from his throne; and as the barons found when, a generation later, they watered the English meadows with each other's blood. For the present it was the hour of authority—authority which had forgotten its own injustice in the crimes of those who had risen in arms against it. Prisoners were brought in in gangs and sent at first with short shrift to the block. *Propter multitudinem perimendorum*, 'on account of the multitude of those who were to be executed,' there was no leisure for more discriminating proceedings. When the first fever of revenge was slaked, Tressilian sat for ordered justice, and the criminals were hanged, drawn, and quartered with the usual ceremonious ferocity.

The insurrection died hard. Jack Straw fled to Norfolk, where the commons were still unbroken. They knew now the mercy for which they had to look. A crowd of infuriated people, said to have numbered fifty thousand, again gathered about him.

Sir John Cavendish, one of the judges, was in the county. They killed him and set his head on a spike in Bury St. Edmund's. Off too went the head of the prior of St. Edmund's monastery, and was set lip to lip with the head of Cavendish. A mock monarch was set up to succeed the Tyler, one John Littestere. They called him 'King of the Commons,' and set themselves in force to attack Norwich.

But the tide had turned, and the barons were now on their guard. Henry le Spencer, a fiery youth whom the fates and a disordered age had made into a bishop, gathered his lances round him. He found Straw and Littestere entrenched at North Walsham, behind a ditch and a barricade of carts. Le Spencer, in full armour, snatched a spear from a comrade, put his horse at the water, and flew over it *velut aper frendens dentibus*—'like a boar grinding his tusks.' The first man that he encountered he pinned to the ground. Then, with a huge double-edged sword, he plunged into the crowd, hewing round him and lopping heads and arms. Fast after the bishop came his mailed companions. The wretched commons were cut down in heaps till none were left to be killed. Straw was sent to London, where Walworth promptly hanged him. The bishop himself took charge of the King of the Commons. Combining

the functions of a ghostly father and provost-marshal, he first heard the poor king's confession and made him ready for eternity. Then throwing him on the hurdle and with his own hand holding up his head—*ne collideretur a terra*—'lest it should be dashed against the ground' as he was being dragged to the gallows, he hung him in chains for the crows to feast on as a lesson to all revolters against the rule of priests and barons.

Sharp practice, and perhaps necessary; yet to be followed promptly by the division of these same high persons into two camps, like the Centaurs and the Lapithæ, two-thirds of them to perish by each other's swords.

Thus rapidly was Wat Tyler's rebellion extinguished in its own blood. The last scene of the drama remained only to be played out before the curtain fell. The stage chosen for the close of the performance was St. Alban's.

We left the abbot in despair—the monks preparing to fly; the Hertfordshire mob drinking the abbot's ale before the gates: Wat Tyler, perhaps, looked for in the morning to reduce the abbey to ashes. So had passed the night of Saturday, June 15. Sunrise brought news of the change in London. The king and the mayor had recovered the city, and Wat Tyler was dead.

A knight followed on a horse, bloody with spurring, bringing orders in the king's name for every one to return to his house. Events had come so thick one upon the other, that the meaning of the new catastrophe was not at once understood. King Richard had renewed his promise of emancipation. The cause survived, if the leader was gone. The mob were not savage, but they persevered in demanding what they considered their rights. Reinforced by the tenants of every farm in the county which the abbey possessed, they required a paper under the abbot's hand, guaranteeing to them in perpetuity a list of specified concessions. Their leaders dictated the principal points in the abbot's chamber. It was not necessary to insist further on emancipation. The king, it was assumed, had put an end to serfdom, by an act which he had solemnly renewed in Smithfield over Wat Tyler's body. The burgesses of the town and the tenants required further their pasture rights, their fishing and warren rights, and the right to grind their corn, free of toll and tithe to the abbot's mills.

A clerk took down their words. The charter of rights was reduced to form ; it was duly signed and sealed, and was carried off and read at the market-cross. Villanage and all forms of forced labour were

declared to be abolished. Carts went round distributing bread and beer. Peace and good-will were to reign thenceforward between high and low, and the day was spent in jollity and mutual congratulations.

'The fools believed,' says Walsingham, 'that all were now as noble as the family of the king himself, and that there were to be no more masters upon earth.'

For several days they were left in their illusion. A few St. Alban's people had been taken in Essex, and were in danger of the gallows. They sent word to their friends. The abbot was appealed to, and the abbot swore, *se maluisse trajectum fuisse gladio quam talia audisse*—'he would rather have been run through with a sword than have heard such a thing.' He and his monks were still defenceless, and, if the people suspected that they were betrayed, the abbey might be destroyed before help could reach them. He despatched a courier to the Court, bidding him spare neither whip nor spur. The prisoners were released, after taking an oath of fealty, and the alarm passed off.

Shortly after, it was reported that Sir Walter at Lee, a Hertfordshire knight, was coming with a party of soldiers to quarter himself at St. Alban's to preserve the peace of the county.

What was the meaning of this? Grindcobbe,

the champion of the burgesses, *plenus improbæ animositatis*, 'full of wicked resolution,' came once more to the front.

'Pluck up your hearts, my friends,' he said; 'we are rich; we shall not want friends while our money holds. There are eight or ten townships of us confederated. Let us mount our horses and meet this Sir Walter, and learn if he comes in peace.'

Out of the nettle danger was to be plucked the flower safety. The St. Alban's citizens encountered Sir Walter, with Grindcobbe at their head. Sir Walter had but fifty lances and a company of archers, who, if he tried violence, might go over to the people's side.

'Gentlemen,' said Sir Walter smoothly, 'his Majesty, who is patron of the Abbey of St. Alban's, has heard of certain wrongs being done to the abbot. He was coming hither himself with a force so large that it would have consumed the whole country. Out of my affection for you I persuaded him to leave the inquiry to me. If you can satisfy the abbot, you have nothing to fear from the king. Let me know who the persons are that have occasioned the riot.'

The speech was apparently well received. The two parties rode together to the town. Sir Walter selected twelve burgesses as a grand jury to present

the names of the men who had done anything wrong. The grand jury returned for answer that no wrong had been done. They were all loyal subjects together.

Sir Walter and his company passed on to the abbey and heard mass, and having then a stout wall and a barred gate to shelter him, he informed the citizens that they must surrender the charters which they had forced the abbot to give them. The citizens answered promptly that they neither could nor would. The country would tear them to pieces.

Sir Walter's followers were not to be relied on. A body of three hundred archers, who had come into the town to support the people, were handling their bows ominously. Sir Walter waited till night, and then, with a small party, he contrived to surprise Grindcobbe in his bed, and with a certain John the Barber, who had been prominent in tearing up the millstones in the abbey parlour, he sent him under a strong guard to Hertford jail.

At Hertford these two gentlemen were likely to have received summary treatment. They were taken before the magistrates in the early morning, and were on the point of being ordered for execution, when an express came from the abbey. The people had risen again, swearing that if their fellow-citizens

were injured they would take a hundred lives for one. The garrison was too weak to be depended on, and justice must pause. Grindcobbe and the Barber were released on bail, the burgesses undertaking that they should surrender on the following Sunday, if peace had not been made meanwhile.

This was on Tuesday, the 18th. Again at St. Alban's they called a meeting, and Grindcobbe, *cujus cor induratum in malo fuerat*, whose heart was hardened in evil, rose and spoke: 'Fellow-townsmen,' he said, 'after long oppression, you have at last secured your freedom. Stand now, therefore, while stand you may. Fear not for me. If they take my life it will prove better in the end for you. I shall count myself happy if I am a martyr in your cause. Act for yourselves as you would have acted if my head had fallen yesterday at Hertford. Nothing saved me then but the abbot's message. The judge was sitting, and they were calling out for my blood.'

Of course there were cheers for Grindcobbe. They were free men, and sooner than their liberty should be torn from them they would all die. They would have Sir Walter's head, and set it on a pole as a warning to tyrants.

Hard as Walsingham considered Grindcobbe's heart, the poor man kept his word which he had

given at Hertford. The town held out as he recommended. He himself, when the week was out, went back to jail, and too probably to death.

Fate was closing round him. Sword and rope had done their work elsewhere; Jack Straw and the King of the Commons had been hanged; the towns of Kent and Essex and the eastern counties had been duly decorated with the heads and quarters of the executed criminals; the king and his chief-justice were now at leisure to attend to Hertfordshire, and to put the finishing stroke to the work of justice. As the month came to its end, there was no longer a doubt that the royal army was really approaching. The fate of the other counties told but too surely what would follow on its arrival.

In honest alarm for the imprisoned Grindcobbe, the burgesses now fell on their knees. Rights, charters, all should be surrendered. They offered the abbot two hundred pounds, equal perhaps to three thousand of our modern money. In vain. The time of grace was past. *Abbas non reputavit illam horam idoneam esse ad tractandum cum illis super re tam arduâ.*—'The abbot did not think it a fitting moment to treat with them on a matter of such importance.' The meaning of this was not to be mistaken. As it had been in Kent, so it was to be in

Hertfordshire. The humbled wretches carried back the fragments of the mill-stones and replaced them in the parlour floor. They flung their charters at the abbot's feet. They brought their gold in bags and meekly prayed the abbot to accept it. The abbot took the gold, but the king came notwithstanding, with his knights and barons and his chief-justice, and St. Alban's, like other places, was to taste the value of royal promises.

A jury of burgesses was again empanelled. Tressilian told them that if they trifled again they should be themselves indicted for treason; and between terror and skilful handling they were drilled into complacency. Grindcobbe and the Barber were brought back from Hertford, and, with thirteen other citizens, were tried, found guilty, and hanged.

A wail of indignant lamentation rose from the town; execrations were heaped upon the abbot, the women especially being eloquent in their fury: and it was feared that the soldiers who had come with the king, and had little love for churchmen, were being seduced by the women's arts.[1] Stake and gallows were threatened freely to silence slanderous

[1] Suadebant et mulieres eorum quod viri non valebant quæ satis communes fuerunt eisdem tempore hospitalitatis.

tongues. But the abbot was his own worst accuser. What deeper condemnation could be pronounced against a house of religion than to have inspired all its dependants with so deadly a hatred?

One more victim had yet to be sacrificed—the original cause of the rebellion, the preacher who had questioned the existence of gentlemen, when Adam delved and Eve was learning to spin. John Ball had been taken at Coventry and had been handed over to Tressilian. The Bishop of London had procured him a few days' respite, being anxious for his soul, *quia circa salutem suæ animæ solicitus fuit.* The saving state of mind being arrived at, he too was made over to the executioner, and on the 15th of July—a month and two days after his triumphal entry into London, fate having overtaken him at last, he was hanged, drawn, and quartered at St. Alban's in the king's presence.

Richard, who had found the month a trying one, and required some amusement after it, now went off on a hunting-party. The mourners who were left behind in the town less easily recovered their spirits. The night of the king's departure the bodies of the burgesses were taken down from the gibbets and buried. The news of the daring exploit found Richard at Berkhampstead. He did not return;

but he, or those about him, sent back orders with which it was necessary to comply. The people were compelled to take the bodies out of the earth and again hang them up in chains.

'Such,' says Walsingham, with childish malignity, 'such was the liberty which they had won for themselves, the liberty of being made into hangmen.'

V.

All was now over, and the chains were once more riveted on the English commons. Something had been gained. The barons recognised that slavery could not last for ever; that means must be found for gradual emancipation; from this time the serfs and villains were allowed, when their lords were willing, to purchase their freedom. All else settled back into the old grooves. The commons failed to rescue themselves from the gripe of the manorial lords. The Wickliffites, who at one time were likely to have antedated the Reformation, were beaten back in the same way along the lines of the spiritual revival. The barons were brought to justice in the wars of the following century, when the feudal system virtually perished. The monasteries, with the superstitions on

which they rested, prolonged their sickly days for another hundred and fifty years. So much grace was granted them if haply they could learn their lesson and repent. Over them, alas! the storm had swept in vain; and they used their respite only that monks and monkery might steep themselves in deeper infamy, and make their very names loathsome in the nostrils of honest Englishmen.

Not willingly did the St. Alban's tenants bend again into obedience to Abbot Thomas de la Mare. Their hand-mills were gone, but sooner than grind at the abbey mills they carted their corn to be ground many miles away beyond the abbot's jurisdiction. The relations of the poor men who had been executed, 'so deadly was their malice,' set fire to the abbot's barns. For many months the bitterness and hate continued. Gradually, however, they bowed their necks to the inevitable. Life in town and convent fell back into the old routine, and the abbot recovered his spirits and forgot his calamities. The king and his soldiers had eaten him bare, but another harvest or two replenished his stores. The lawsuits which he won brought him wealth, and with the wealth he added splendour to the abbey. He bought pictures for the church in Italy. He regilt the shrine, rebuilt the hall and gateway; he glazed the cloister,

and found an artist to paint in fresco in front of the chapter house the likeness *suæ Majestatis*, i. e. of Christ. Sore at the attacks upon his warrens, he became the strictest of game-preservers. The monks complained that they could not be allowed now and then so much as a day's shooting. Otherwise they admitted that he was a kindly old gentleman, good to the sick, gracious in manner to all, and not too harsh in enforcing austerities upon others which he scrupulously practised himself. He wore a hair-shirt, with which he never parted. Once or twice a week, *corporales disciplinas satis asperas suscepit*,—he gave himself a severe flogging. At length, growing very old, he became helpless in body and imbecile in mind. In this state he lingered till he was 87 years old, and when he died, there died with him all that was left of worth in the Abbey of St. Alban's.

The Prior, brother de la Moote, who had for some years managed everything, had made his own arrangements for his election as successor. No sooner was the breath out of Abbot Thomas's body, than the prior's friends voted him in by acclamation without prayer or ceremony; seized him in their arms, carried him into the church, and seated him on the altar. Huge presents to the king and Pope secured the

ratification of the otherwise scandalous proceeding, and then set in in earnest the age of riot and extravagance. The monks did not fill up their numbers, that there might be more money to share among those who remained. Their complement was a hundred. They fell away to sixty-four and thence to fifty. The abbot lavished the revenues upon costly buildings—the most worthless of these great persons being always those whose tastes were most magnificent. He spent large sums at St. Alban's. He spent sums still larger on a private palace which he erected on a distant estate. He kept no accounts; all was waste and confusion. No note was taken of days of rest or saints' days. Alike on fast and festival, spade and pickaxe, trowel and hammer, were kept busy. All regard for religion appeared to have perished. At length the 'pains of Gehenna' overtook him. He died of remorse and pleurisy.

There is no occasion to follow step by step the descent of the stair which ended in destruction. Two abbots only out of the remainder of the list require to be noticed, the second of whom may be said to have achieved a supremacy of infamy; the other at the better end of the scale lived to show how well-intentioned men found their moral nature contaminated in the conventual atmosphere.

Abbot John, of Whethampsteade, having held office for some years in the early part of the 15th century, retired as unable to conduct the business satisfactorily to himself or others. He was succeeded by an Abbot Stokes, whose administration was again a scene of confusion and peculation. At Stokes's death, in 1452, there being no other tolerable candidate, the convent invited the aged Abbot John to resume the ungrateful duty. On taking the reins once more, Abbot John found the management of the house had fallen entirely into the hands of a young monk of sharp business qualities, named William of Wallingford. On this William were heaped the offices of archdeacon, cellarer, sub-cellarer, bursar, forester, and chamberlain. He was *officiarius generalis*—official general, in fact, and was known by that name in the abbey.

Abbot Stokes, among his other delinquencies, had been a miser. On his death-bed he was surrounded by a group of brethren, among whom the prior, as spokesman for the rest, thus addressed him:

'Sir,' he said to the dying man, 'you have been a Midas, seeking only for gold. For the Church you have done nothing. To us monks you have been mean and parsimonious. Death is now at your door, and has almost sealed your lips. Tell us now, while

you are able to speak, what have you been doing these eleven years with the abbey revenues?'

The abbot muttered feebly that he had saved and secreted a thousand marks. Four hundred of them he left to the convent for repairs. The rest he bequeathed to the next abbot, who would find the accounts in disorder.

The prior inquired where the hoard would be found. The abbot pointed to the *officiarius* and his brother Thomas. They could indicate the place, he said. It was in a chest under the dormitory. The abbot died. The *officiarius* was invited to produce the treasure. He brought out two small locked boxes, which, when opened, were found to contain two hundred and fifty marks. He protested that he knew of no more.

The prior, *stupefactus*, said no more at the time. This little incident was probably the secret of the recall of Abbot John, whose age and weight might counterbalance the power of this questionable William. Abbot John, after his second installation, felt himself long unequal to pressing so delicate an inquiry. It was plain to him that in the official and his brother he had to deal with an Ananias and Sapphira; but he knew not precisely how to act towards them. In theory the possession of private property

was a breach of the monastic vow; but the rule had been effete too long to bear sudden revival. At length he collected his courage, sent for the *officiarius*, and questioned him.

The unabashed *officiarius* stood to his story. He admitted that Abbot Stokes had spoken of a thousand marks; but the abbot's senses must have been wandering. He swore by God and all the saints, he even offered to swear on the sacraments, that for his part he knew of nothing but what he had produced.

'Brother,' Abbot John answered, 'no God-fearing man can believe that my predecessor told a lie when he was dying. To lie at that time is to go straight to the author of sin and everlasting darkness. Do not slander his memory. If you have kept back the money, confess. You commit one sin in having money at all; you commit another, and a worse, when you perjure yourself.'

The *officiarius* had gone too far to draw back. He persisted in his innocence. His brother Thomas persisted with equal confidence. Both wished they might go to hell, and never see paradise, if they were not speaking the truth.

The abbot bade them have mercy on their souls. He told them that they were doing worse than murder; the pit might swallow them up.

They had probably come to consider the pit a highly problematical place. They swore again, with all most solemn attestations, that Abbot Stokes had been mistaken; and the Abbot John, knowing that they had a strong party in the convent and out of it at their backs, and that if he pressed too hard, *odium potius quam aurum extorqueret*, he might extort more hate than gold, again seemed to let the inquiry drop.

But he kept his eyes open. Two accounts are given, slightly differing, of what followed. Substantially, however, it was something of this kind. The most cautious rogues are not always consistent in their stories. At one time the *officiarius* admitted, in confession, that he owned property to the amount of £160. At another he said, in conversation, that he had paid £140 to the abbot. The abbot sent for his accounts under the heads of his different offices: under each head the convent was made out to be in debt. The abbot asking what was to be done, the *officiarius* said coolly that the treasury was empty, and he must borrow. It was too much. Secret investigations had revealed that the *officiarius* had been speculating with the funds of the abbey 'like a child of this world,' *filius hujus sæculi*. He had been buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, and

pocketing his gains.[1] On his first entrance into the convent, while yet a lad, he had been a capitalist, and was found to have lent money upon usury. As bursar he had cut down wood and sold it, and had made no entry of the payments. He had manumitted 'villains,' and the price of their freedom had gone to his private purse.

The abbot, *in mente abhorrens*, delivered his soul!

'What!' he exclaimed, 'have you not confessed? Is not the whole convent ringing with it, that you have £160? Have you not said that you have brought £140 to me? Blush, brother, blush. This is the most audacious lie that you have yet told. Under what planet were you born? You know well you have brought me no money. You so swear and forswear and contradict yourself that there is no truth in you. It is now plain, as others have told me, that you will say anything. You are not to be believed though you swear on book or sacrament. You have plundered us in your places of trust; we are in debt and cannot maintain our state. How unfit are you then to hold office in the family of the Lord! Where is the money for which you sold our woods? Where is the price of our villains' freedom?'

[1] Studuisti assidue bono pretio emere et caro pretio vendere. It is interesting to find a man charged as if it were a crime with having acted on the cardinal maxim of the modern science of sciences.

In Abbot Paul's time the punishment for such an *officiarius* would have been excommunication till full confession; after confession the hair-shirt, the scourge, the penitential vigil; years of disgrace and suffering; and absolution hardly earned at last. Times were changed. The new age had trampled out the old, and penance was out of fashion.

Abbot John was a good man in his way, but he was more anxious to recover his money than to punish sin. If he could wring out of the alarms of the *officiarius* a share of the spoils, convent discipline might lie over till better times, and brother William's talents for business might be useful to the abbey.

'Go now,' he continued; 'in recompense for these transgressions bring the late abbot's hoard. Bring what you have yourself gained by your unlawful tradings. The brother that conceals treasure departs from God and becomes one of the family of the Devil. Dives, for his avarice, had his reward in hell. Lest you too go to the same place, fetch the money. It must be a thousand pounds in all. If you refuse, I will proceed against you by the canons Use no more vain subterfuges. The good servant may live by his office, but if he is a robber and a thief he is fit only to be hanged, and to burst asunder like Judas. Tell no more lies. *Peccatores,* are they, brother, not

vrecatores (the abbot condescending to pun), who heap up riches and deny the possession of them? *Prœvaricatores*, are they, not *prædicatores*, who justify themselves, and wash their hands in innocency when they are really guilty? Bring the money, I say; bring it, and you shall find me your gracious lord. You may keep something in your own purse, that you may live like an honest fellow. You must not pile up gold for yourself, and give nothing to your brethren. I can allow you to do a stroke of business now and then for yourself. Confine yourself within the limits which I prescribe, and you shall not be worried about your vow of property;[1] but do not plunge into the mire, or for a little gain risk being swallowed in the pit for ever.'

So ended the abbot's harangue, and the *officiarius* withdrew to bethink himself. If he gave up the money, he confessed to perjury. If he held out, he might be prosecuted and the whole convent might turn against him. He was a monk of resources. He went privately to the abbot's chaplain. If the abbot, he said, would indeed be his gracious lord, and would leave him in his offices, he would pay all the outstand-

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[1] Et nullus contra te objiciet aut super vitio proprietatis impropera- | bit in æternum—a faint pun again on the word property.

ing debts of the abbey. He would pay the sums which were due to the Pope and king on the last election; and he would undertake further that in three years his abbot should have three hundred pounds in the treasury, and should owe nothing to any man.

The compromise was eagerly caught at. What more could be desired? Gold flowing like the stream of Pactolus; and scandals smoothed over and buried.

Abbas gavisus non modice. The abbot was delighted. Brother William, who had been *filius perditionis*, was once more an heir of salvation. The chaplain was empowered to say that, on these terms, all should be forgotten. The *officiarius* 'was as glad as one that had found great spoils.' The debts were paid; the abbey flourished, as well as the Roses wars would allow, so long as Abbot John lived; and when he died, we read without wonder that, after a short interval, this William of Wallingford, by consent of the whole house, reigned in his stead.

Little more remains to be said. We shall read without wonder also, that of all abbots of St. Alban's, this William of Wallingford contributed most towards the erection of that magnificent pile of buildings whose ruins breathe celestial music into the spirit of sentimental pietism.

It was the same William of Wallingford who

made the Abbey of St. Alban's, while he ruled over it, a nest of sodomy and fornication—the very aisles of the church itself being defiled with the abominable orgies of incestuous monks and nuns.

The evidence of their infamy lies recorded with deadly conclusiveness. The cry of indignation against the condition of the exempt English abbeys reached to Rome, and shocked even the tolerant worldliness of the much-enduring Pope. When the civil war was over, and Henry VII. was settled on the throne, Innocent VIII. enjoined Cardinal Morton to visit St. Alban's, and report upon it. Cardinal Morton, after examination of witnesses, has left in his Register [1] as the result of his enquiry, that the brethren of the abbey were living in filth and lasciviousness with the inmates of the dependent sisterhoods; that the adjoining Nunnery of Pray was a common brothel; the prioress setting the example, by living in unrebuked adultery with one of the monks. The abbot himself, too old for pleasures of the flesh, had reverted to his early habits: had cut down the woods and sold them; had made away with the altar-vessels, and stolen and disposed of the

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[1] Cardinal Morton's letter to the abbot, detailing the scandals which had been discovered, is printed in the third volume of Wilkins' *Concilia*. The original is in Morton's Register at Lambeth.

jewels of the shrine. The few members of the house who retained a sense of decency were oppressed and persecuted; and the beautiful abbey, the home of the Protomartyr, which had been born in miracles and cradled in asceticism, was given over to the abomination of desolation.

Another fifty years, and the religious houses in England—the soul of them long dead, the body putrefying and poisoning the air—were swept away by the besom of Henry VIII. The land could bear with them no longer. So abhorred were they, that in many places the country people rose on them, and when the Government gave the word tore them down, aisle and tower, groined arch and fluted column, down to the very ground, not leaving one stone upon another, and driving the plough over the spot where they had stood. In the general ruin, the church of St. Alban's was saved by the burgesses. The long battle was over at last. The scene of so many struggles was endeared to them by the recollection of the fight. On the passing of the Act of Suppression, they purchased the buildings from the Crown for £400; and part of the church itself has been used since the Reformation for the Protestant service.

The ruins of the rest have stood for three centuries, instructive emblems of the fate of noble in-

stitutions which survive the spirit which gave them meaning and utility. They preach with a silent force more eloquent than the tongues of a thousand orators, that the most saintly professions are not safe from the grossest corruption, and that the more ambitious the pretensions to piety, the more austere is the vengeance on the neglect of it.

There is a talk now of restoring St. Alban's. We are affecting penitence for the vandalism of our Puritan forefathers, and are anxious to atone for it.

Cursed is he that rebuildeth Jericho. Never were any institutions brought to a more deserved judgment than the monastic orders of England; and a deeper irreverence than the Puritan lies in the spurious devotionalism of an age which has lost its faith, and with its faith has lost the power to recognise the visible workings of the ineffable Being by whose breath we are allowed to exist.

REVIVAL OF ROMANISM.

SECTION I.

REVIVAL OF ROMANISM.

THE proverb which says that nothing is certain but the unforeseen was never better verified than in the resurrection, as it were out of the grave, during the last forty years, of the Roman Catholic religion. In my own boyhood it hung about some few ancient English families like a ghost of the past. They preserved their creed as an heirloom which tradition rather than conviction made sacred to them. A convert from Protestantism to Popery would have been as great a monster as a convert to Buddhism or Odin worship. 'Believe in the Pope!' said Dr. Arnold, 'I should as soon believe in Jupiter.' The singular change which we have witnessed and are still witnessing is not due to freshly-discovered evidence of the truth of what had been abandoned as super-

stition. The intellect which saw the falsehood of the papal pretensions in the sixteenth century, sees it only more clearly in the nineteenth. More than ever the assumptions of the Holy See are perceived to rest on error or on fraud. The doctrines of the Catholic Church have gained only increased improbability from the advance of knowledge. Her history in the light of critical science is a tissue of legend woven by the devout imagination. Liberty, spiritual and political, has thriven in spite of her most desperate opposition, till it has invaded every government in the world, and has penetrated at last even the territories of the Popes themselves. In his own dominions, at least, the Holy Father flattered himself he could maintain an administration based on Catholic principles as an example to the unbelieving world. His rule became so abhorred that it could be upheld only by the bayonets of the stranger. When the stranger withdrew, his power fell from him by its inherent worthlessness, and he has been driven by his subjects in irreverent impotence within the walls of his own Vatican.

The tide of knowledge and the tide of outward events have set with equal force in the direction opposite to Romanism; yet in spite of it, perhaps by means of it, as a kite rises against the wind, the

Roman Church has once more shot up into visible and practical consequence. While she loses ground in Spain and Italy, which had been so long exclusively her own, she is gaining in the modern energetic races, which had been the stronghold of Protestantism. Her numbers increase, her organization gathers vigour. Her clergy are energetic, bold, and aggressive. Sees, long prostrate, are re-established; cathedrals rise, and churches, with schools, and colleges, and convents, and monasteries. She has taken into her service her old enemy the press, and has established a popular literature. Her hierarchy in England and America have already compelled the State to consult their opinions and respect their pleasure; while each step that is gained is used as a vantage-ground from which to present fresh demands. Hildebrand, in the plenitude of his power, was not more arrogant in his claim of universal sovereignty than the present wearer of the tiara.

What is the meaning of so strange a phenomenon? Is the progress of which we hear so much less real than we thought? Does knowledge grow more shallow as the surface widens? Is it that science is creeping like the snake upon the ground, eating dust and bringing forth materialism? that the Catholic Church, in spite of her errors, keeps alive the con-

sciousness of our spiritual being, and the hope and expectation of immortality? The Protestant Churches are no less witnesses to the immortal nature of the soul, and the awful future which lies before it, than the Catholic Church. Why is Protestantism standing still while Rome is advancing? Why does Rome count her converts from among the evangelicals by tens, while she loses to them, but here and there, an exceptional and unimportant unit?

Many causes have united to bring about such a state of things. Many and even contradictory tendencies can be seen to have combined in the result. When the Oxford theologians began, in 1832, their attempt to unprotestantise the Church of England, they were roused to activity chiefly by the Latitudinarianism of the then popular Whig philosophy. The Whigs believed that Catholics had changed their nature and had grown liberal, and had insisted on emancipating them. The Tractarians looked on emancipation as the fruit of a spirit which was destroying Christianity, and would terminate at last in atheism. They imagined that by reasserting the authority of the Anglican Church, they could at once stem the encroachments of Popery and arrest the progress of infidelity. Both Whigs and Tractarians were deceiving themselves. The Catholic Church is

unchanging as the Ethiopian's skin, and remains, for good or evil, the same to-day as yesterday. The Tractarians' principles led the ablest of them into that very fold against which they had imagined themselves the most efficient of barriers. From the day in which they established their party in the Anglican communion, a steady stream of converts has passed through it into the Catholic ranks; while the Whigs, in carrying emancipation, gave the Catholics political power, and with power the respect and weight in the outer world, which in free countries always attends it. No principles could have seemed more opposite than those which in 1832 divided the Oxford divines from the Radical philosophers. Yet they have combined in the same effect. They are even combined in the single person of the late Prime Minister of England, who wished to force the great liberal party there, the inheritors and custodians of the free traditions of the nation, to unite with him in handing over the national education of Ireland to the Catholic prelates.

The phenomenon is not confined to England. An attempt of the same kind to get possession of the education funds has been made and will be repeated in New York. In America, in Holland, in Switzerland, in France, wherever there is most

political freedom, the power of the Catholics is increasing.

The battle of Sadowa overthrew the Jesuits in Austria, where they had so long reigned over soul and body. The re-establishment of the German Empire under Protestant Prussia is virtually the crowning victory of the struggle which began in the Thirty Years' War. The papal party there is, at last, finally broken, and when the Jesuits begin their old intrigues again they are made to know, by the most abrupt and decisive measures, that there is a master over them who now means to be obeyed. In free countries, on the other hand, where the right of every one to his own opinion is a cardinal proposition, where the executive authority is purposely kept weak, and parties of all kinds are encouraged to combine to advance their own theories, there Jesuitism finds itself at home. There, by the possession of those peculiar qualities which States constitutionally governed are least able to develop, it works at special advantage in a soil ready prepared for the seed. Partly from the desire of change and from the weariness with what is familiar; partly from the superiority of organisation in countries where power is proportioned to numbers, and where the peasant of Tipperary or the tide-waiter of New York has the

same value as a voter as the more cultivated English or American citizen; partly from intellectual causes which require more careful examination; it is a fact not to be denied that in countries where, at the beginning of the century, a Catholic was as rare as frost in July, and the idea of a return of Popery would have been ridiculed as madness, there, nevertheless, Popery is returning with a rapidity and a force so remarkable as to challenge attention and explanation. The reaction is strongest where the movement in the opposite direction was most violent. France, the France of the Revolution and the Goddess of Reason, the France of Science and the Academy, the France which, however dark her outward fortunes, held with easy pre-eminence the intellectual sovereignty of Europe—France has seen, during these last years, her most accomplished sons and daughters flocking as pilgrims to the scenes of a pretended miracle; and a woman who deserved rather a year's hard labour in a jail is erected into a saint.

Pio Nono, in the midst of his calamities, declares himself infallible. Italy answers with contempt. Germany replies with telling the bishops that whether their master be exempt from the failings of other mortals or not, they shall obey the law of their

country. In America, and England, and France, many millions of pious people bend before the decrees of the late Council as if they were indeed pronounced by the Holy Spirit. As the reality of his power passes from him, the Pope's pretensions shine larger than ever. In spite of reason, in spite of history, each day he finds his dominion extending. Each day he has a firmer grasp upon the public press, the education, and the government of the countries which had revolted against him with greatest fierceness. Whither all this is tending, and what are the causes of so unexpected a phenomenon, I propose to consider briefly in a succession of short essays.

SECTION II.

ATTRACTION OF ROMANISM FOR UNEASY PROTESTANTS.

Religion differs from moral science in the authority with which it speaks. Moral science addresses the reason, and is contented with probabilities. It indicates what, on the whole, after examination of the evidence, appear to be the ethical conditions under which human beings exist in this planet. Religion, on the other hand, speaks with command, and corresponds to the laws of the State. The law lays down a set of rules, and says to every man, 'Conform to

these, or you will be punished.' Religion lays down a set of doctrines, and says, 'Believe these at your soul's peril.' A certain peremptoriness being thus of the essence of the thing, those religious teachers will always command most confidence who dare most to speak in positive tones. Assertions hesitatingly expressed, or qualified with modest reserve, may suit the lecture-room or the study; but they are out of place in the pulpit. An eager, heavy-laden soul crying out from his heart, 'What must I do to be saved?' will listen only to a preacher who shows that he believes himself with all his energy in the answer which he gives. It is no secret that of late years Protestant divines have spoken with less boldness, with less clearness and confidence, than their predecessors of the last generation. They are not to be blamed for it. Their intellectual position has grown in many ways perplexed. Science and historical criticism have shaken positions which used to be thought unassailable. Doctrines once thought to carry their own evidence with them in their inherent fitness for man's needs, have become, for some reason or other, less conclusively obvious. The state of mind to which they were addressed has been altered—altered in some way either for the worse or the better. And where the evangelical theology retains its hold, it is

rather as something which it is unbecoming to doubt, than as a body of living truth which penetrates and vitalises the heart.

Thus where truth was once flashed out like lightning, and attended with oratorical thunders, it is now uttered with comparative feebleness. The most honest, perhaps, are the most uncomfortable and most hesitating, while those who speak most boldly are often affecting a confidence which in their hearts they do not feel. At the time of the revolt from Rome, and for a century after it, the characteristic of a Protestant was his hatred of falsehood. The ingenious sophistry which would make a proposition at once false and true, false in one aspect and true in another, was a snare of Satan to be trampled on and detested. Truth was truth, to be loved beyond all earthly or unearthly things. Lies were lies, and all the philosophy in the world could not make them cease to be lies, or make an honest mind put up with them. Had Protestant preachers the ancient courage, they might still display this, the noblest aspect of their characters. But from some cause, it seems they dare not speak, they dare not think like their fathers. Too many of them condescend to borrow the weapons of their adversaries. They are not looking for what is true; they are looking for arguments to defend

positions which they know to be indefensible. Their sermons are sometimes sophistical, sometimes cold and mechanical, sometimes honestly diffident. Any way, they are without warmth, and cannot give what they do not possess.

The Romanist has availed himself of the opportunity. Every difficulty which troubles his rival ought to trouble him still more, but he has long since confounded truth with the affirmations of what he calls the Church. The Protestant finding three centuries ago that the institution called the Church was teaching falsehood, refused to pin his faith upon the Church's sleeve thenceforward. He has relied upon his own judgment, and times come when he is perplexed. The Romanist, in fancied triumph over him, points to his infallible authority. 'See,' he says, 'what comes of schism. The Church is the appointed guide. The Church alone guarantees to us the existence of God or of the soul. Believe with us or be atheists; there is no alternative.' In the Hindoo legend, the world stands on the back of an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise. We ask where the tortoise stands, and we get no answer. Similarly we ask the Romanist where his Church stands. 'It stands,' he says, 'on Peter, and Peter stands upon Christ.' That is, stripped of verbiage, it stands pre-

cisely on the same foundation on which the Protestant religion stands—on the truth of the Gospel history. Before we can believe the Gospel history, we must appeal to the consciousness of God's existence, which is written on the hearts of us all. We are not really competent to choose between the Catholic Church and atheism, for the Catholic has no evidence of the being of God which is not common to every other Christian—nor any of the truths of the Gospel narrative but such as the Protestant shares with him. But his Church stands as a visible thing, which appeals to the imagination as well as the reason. The vexed soul, weary of its doubts, and too impatient to wait till it pleases God to clear away the clouds, demands a certainty on which it can repose—never to ask a question more. By an effort of will, which, while claiming the name of faith, is in reality a want of faith, it seizes the Catholic system as a whole. Foregoing the use of the natural reason for evermore, it accepts the words of a spiritual director as an answer to every difficulty, and finds, as it supposes, the peace for which it longed, as the body which is drugged with opium ceases to feel pain.

The convert, if he has been brought up a Protestant, asks for an interpretation of this or that doctrine which he had heard condemned as idolatrous,

of this or that historical event where the Church had seemed to have acted as if inspired, not by God, but by the devil. The director meets him with a confident assertion that Protestant tradition is based on lying; that the Church was always tolerant and loving; that the tyranny and ferocity were with the sects which had broken from her communion. Prepared by his emotional sympathies to welcome the explanation, the convert listens willingly, satisfies his remaining scruples with books put into his hands, the truth of which he greedily assumes, and his dissatisfaction with the creed from which he has separated deepens into resentment and hatred.

To no purpose afterwards is evidence laid before such a man — evidence which would pass for conclusive in a court of justice—that the Protestant traditions were, after all, true; that history remains where it was; that the lying is on the side of the new teachers. He chooses to think otherwise. He no longer reasons, but feels. Opinions adopted through the emotions are thenceforward inaccessible to argument. Excited by his new position, he throws himself ardently into the devotional exercises which the Church prescribes, and the zeal of which he is conscious becomes a fresh proof to him that he has really found the truth.

A Protestant, from the nature of things, comes in contact with the Catholic system in its most seductive form. Where it has been in power, the Church of Rome has shown its real colours. It has been lazy, sensual, and tyrannical. It has alienated every honest mind in Spain and Italy, just as three centuries ago it alienated the forefathers of those who are now returning to its bosom. In Protestant countries where it is in opposition, it wears the similitude of an angel. It is energetic and devoted; it avoids scandal; it appeals to toleration, and, therefore, pretends to be itself tolerant. Elsewhere it has killed the very spirit of religion, and those who break from it believe nothing. Evangelicalism has kept alive a spirit of piety and hunger for the knowledge of God. The Catholic missionaries make their market out of feelings which but for the Protestantism which they denounce would have ceased to exist, and find easy victims in those whose emotional temperament is stronger than their intellect or their faith.

Trials there have always been, and always will be, intellectual as well as moral. Our business, when they overtake us, is to bear them. We may not immediately see our way out of a difficulty; but we may still keep our conviction unshaken that there

are explanations which we do not see ourselves. To go over to an alien Church, because for a moment some evidence on which we had relied in our own seems less strong than we had supposed, is, when rightly looked at, mere cowardice and treason against our own souls.

How far these conversions may go it is impossible to say. So much only can be foretold with certainty, that if by this or any other cause the Catholic Church anywhere recovers her ascendency, she will again exhibit the detestable features which have invariably attended her supremacy. Her rule will be once more found incompatible either with justice or with intellectual growth, and our children will be forced to recover by some fresh struggle the ground which our forefathers conquered for us, and which we by our pusillanimity surrendered.

SECTION III.

POLITICAL STRENGTH OF ROMANISM IN FREE COUNTRIES.

THE peculiarity of the Roman Church as a system of discipline and government lies in the universal character asserted for it by the mediæval Pontiffs. The sovereign authority is external to the different na-

tionalities, the individuals of which belong to the Roman communion. It knows nothing of national institutions, and cares nothing for national interests except so far as it can employ them for its own purposes. Complete in itself, acknowledging no equal upon earth, and listening to no remonstrance, the Holy See remains unchanged, and incapable of change. Often baffled, often driven back and defeated, it recoils only to readvance on the same lines. It relinquishes no privilege. It abandons no province over which it has once asserted its right to rule. It treats the world alternately as an enemy to be encountered, or as an instrument to be bent to its own designs, and caring nothing for any institution but itself, free from all prejudices in favour of any nation or any political form of government, it allies itself with all the principles which sway successively in the various organisations of society. Monarchies, aristocracies, democracies, it accepts them all, and utilises them indifferently; regarding none of them as having a right to exist save by the will and pleasure of the wearer of the tiara; but treating them as phenomena of the world, which it is the business of the Church to control, and lending the Church's authority to whatever party promises to be most useful to it.

Never was the Church better disciplined, never more completely denationalised and unpatriotic than at the present moment. When her creed was really and universally received and believed, her bishops and archbishops were engaged in the local government of their several countries. They were English, they were French, they were Spanish. They shared in national aspirations, they were swayed by national prejudices. The Popes themselves were often rather Italian princes than vicegerents over the mystic organism which was co-extensive with mankind. As temporal governments have become secularised, the influences have ceased which so long interfered with the centralising tendencies of the system. As division of opinion grows among the masses, those who remain or who become members of the Catholic Church find a closer bond of union in their creed than in their temporal allegiance. The Church of Rome is now herself and nothing else. From the Pontiff to the humblest parish priest, her ecclesiastics acknowledge no object save the assertion of the Catholic cause. Her bishops and clergy all over the world are as completely obedient to orders from Rome, they work together as harmoniously and enthusiastically, as the officers of a perfectly organised army. Whether in their own minds they approve or disapprove the

orders which they receive—it is no matter—they obey them. The Immaculate Conception is proclaimed; there is a murmur of surprise, but it dies away; the miracle in the womb of St. Anne becomes thenceforth a matter of faith. Papal infallibility claims to be acknowledged; clamour follows, and even active resistance, but when the decree is past, submission is absolute. The hierarchy regard themselves as soldiers of a cause to which all minor interests, all personal opinions must yield. Unanimity and co-operation are essential to success; and with a heartiness, an enthusiasm, a singleness of purpose which is never forgotten, and to which every enjoyment and occupation of life is deliberately postponed, the entire ecclesiastical order devotes itself, body and soul, to the propagation of the principles of the Roman Church. Rarely, or never, do we hear now of personal scandals, rarely of rash experiments which expose the cause to discredit. If a mistake is made, as with the vision of the virgin in the south of France, there is no confession or retractation. The united power of the priesthood is brought to bear to carry the imposture through; opposition is faced down, and courage and resolution turn the shame into a fresh triumph.

An organisation of this kind acts obviously with

extraordinary advantage in countries which have free institutions. Where there is a vigorous executive, where the secular government has an existence of its own, and the representative body is simply consultative or legislative, the growth of an *imperium in imperio*, an authority, distinct from the State, and moved by impulses exterior to the realm, is always jealously watched, and when it becomes aggressive, is encountered and restrained. So it was in the old German empire. So it was in England under the Plantagenet and Tudor princes. Even in Spain, the most Catholic country in the world, the Church's aspirations were often uncomfortably checked. The State in France supported the Gallican liberties. Joseph II. in Austria beats down priestly encroachment and ties its hands. Germany is no sooner united again under the imperial crown than the same problem returns. The Church is encountered by principles which intend to assert themselves. She has declared war against those principles. She opposes them with her old arts. She is at once seized by the throat, and driven back within her own lines.

In countries governed by authority, intelligence rules. In free countries, numbers rule. The supremacy of the Church is incompatible with any kind

of liberty—liberty of conscience or of reason, liberty for man to expand in any direction save what the Church marks out for him. Obviously and confessedly, it is the enemy of everything which we now call civilisation and improvement. Yet it is an enemy against which self-governed peoples, who are most proud of their supposed advancement, contend at greatest disadvantage. Power follows the majority of votes. The Church marshals its forces in an unbroken phalanx. The theory of a free government supposes every citizen to be influenced by patriotism, to exert his own intelligence, to take a personal and individual share in the business of the State. The Roman Catholics have no country but their Church. They are allowed no independence. They are private soldiers in an army which is commanded by the priests, and united and organised action is as superior at the polling-booth as an army is superior to a mob in the field. They claim their right to the free assertion of their opinions in the name of republican principles, and it cannot be denied them. But no such republican liberty is permitted within their own communion. They obey their commanders, and their commanders care nothing for the nation in the management of which they are challenging a share. They are members of a spirit

ual empire which aims only at submitting all other powers under its feet. They are Catholics first, and Americans or English afterward. Yet as English or American citizens, they possess the privileges of freemen, and the wire-pullers at political elections, whose horizon is bounded by the result of some immediate struggle, know too well the value of such allies to be unwilling to bid high for their support. Thus it is that in the English Parliament, though England does not herself return a single Catholic representative, the Catholics, through the Irish members, often hold the balance of power, and governments exist but by their sufferance. Thus lately the Catholic vote controlled the city of New York, and but for the disgrace in which they were involved by the scandalous corruption of the party which they had borne into power, the Catholics would have probably controlled it at this moment.

Those who believe, as I do, that the Catholic doctrines are false, that the Catholic pretensions to universal sovereignty are absurd, and that, in the long run, truth and good sense are certain to prevail, see in this apparent recovery of strength but an eddy in the great stream of tendency. They will be provoked at the folly which may throw back for a generation individual nations, delay the general im-

provement, generate, perhaps, once more political complications; but they will rest confident of the general result. In the sixteenth century the Catholic Church courted the alliance of the despotic sovereigns. The despotic sovereigns seemed towers of strength to it; but when they fell, it was buried in their ruins. It avails itself now of the weak side of party government in constitutional monarchies and republics, and it achieves an apparent success; but the success can only last till patriotism and intelligence are awake to its advances. The minds of a whole people are less easily penetrated than the mind of a minister like Prince Bismarck, but when the conviction reaches them, they will assert themselves with the same emphasis and the same effect.

SECTION IV.

CAUSES OF WEAKNESS IN MODERN PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

Always when men are in earnest about religion, it will appear as a visibly controlling influence in their daily habits. Men who have a real, genuine belief in God, men to whom God is not a name, but an awful, ever-present reality, think naturally before

all other things how they best can please Him; how they can make His law the law of their own existence. This is the meaning of saving faith. A faith that is alive, a faith that is a faith in deed and in fact, issues necessarily in a life of holiness.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was the waking up, after a long slumber, of a living conviction of this kind; and the Reformers were not more distinguished from the Catholics by the simplicity of their doctrines than by the austerity and purity of their lives. The veil of imposture which had so long shut out the light of the sky had suddenly been rent away. The ritualistic paraphernalia which had usurped the functions of piety appeared as the tawdry furniture of a theatre when surprised by daylight. Masses, penances, absolutions, pilgrimages to the shrines of saints—mechanical substitutes, all of them, for a life of righteousness—were recognised in their infinite contemptibility as but the idle mummery of a spiritual puppet-play. The true nature of human existence, the tremendous responsibilities of it, the majesty and purity of God, and the assurance of his judgment, came home as they had never come before to the hearts of those whose eyes were opened. Thus, while in their consciousness of sin and infirmity, the Reformers repudiated with passionate earnestness

every notion of human merit; while they denied that by the fullest obedience men could either deserve God's favour, or escape his wrath, they endeavoured, nevertheless, with all their souls, to learn and to do his will. They loved what they knew to be good; they hated what they knew to be evil. They lived soberly, purely, modestly, honestly, and industriously. They modelled themselves after the highest conceptions of duty which they were able to form. Wealth would have been showered on Luther had he cared to receive it: his scale of expenditure was that of a modern artisan. Calvin might have commanded any income that he liked to name from the revenues at Geneva: he was contented with the average wages of a clerk. The example of the apostles of the Reformation was the rule to their followers, and when the congregations were in a position to give to their convictions the effect of law, they framed their institutions on the principles of the strictest morality. In Geneva, in Scotland, in England—as long as the Calvinistic party retained power—the civil magistrate was the guardian of the morals of the people. A sin against the Almighty was treated as a crime against the State; and adultery, and drunkenness, and impurity, foul language, disobedience to parents, and all the various forms of dishonesty which the

law now lets alone, were brought within the cognisance of the secular authority.

A discipline so severe could only have extended into the public administration when it had been introduced spontaneously by the mass of the citizens into their private families; and a religion which could display its power in characters so legible had no need of the support of arguments. When we see a tree in vigorous health, we do not ask it to prove to us that it is alive. The fact carries its own evidence with it, and we demand no more. A religion which holds possession of our lives, which directs us at each step which we take, becomes part of our own souls. Unless, in some shape or other, it prescribes a rule of conduct, it inevitably loses its hold. The Catholic system scarce leaves an hour without its stated duties; such and such forms to be gone through, such and such prayers to be repeated. Night and day, morning and evening, at meals and in the intervals between meals, the Catholic is reminded of his creed by a set form. Calvinism superseded these formal observances by yet more noble practical observances. It was ever present with its behests in fixing the scale of permitted expenditure, in regulating the dress, the food, the enjoyments, the hours of sleep and labour; sternly cutting short all idle

pleasure and luxury; sternly insisting on the right performance of all practical work, the trade, the handicraft, or whatever it might be, as something for every thread and fibre of which a man would one day be called to account.

There is no mystery in the influence which Calvinism was thus able to exercise as long as the spirit of it lasted; neither is there any mystery in the decline of that influence when the fruits of faith became less and less conspicuous. Ideas are more powerful when they are fresh. Enthusiasm cools, emotions die away, when the cause which evoked them grows familiar. Our hearts are like metal, malleable at high temperature, but hardening as the heat evaporates, and selfishness begins to reassert itself. After the middle of the seventeenth century Protestantism ceased to be aggressive. It no longer produced men conspicuously noble and better than Romanism, and, therefore, it no longer made converts. As it became established, it adapted itself to the world, laid aside its harshness, confined itself more and more to the enforcement of particular doctrines, and abandoned, at first tacitly and afterward deliberately, the pretence to interfere with private life or practical business.

Thus Protestant countries are no longer able to

boast of any special or remarkable moral standard; and the effect of the creed on the imagination is analogously impaired. Protestant nations show more energy than Catholic nations, because the mind is left more free, and the intellect is undistorted by the authoritative instilment of false principles. But Protestant nations have been guilty, as nations, of enormous crimes. Protestant individuals, who profess the soundest of creeds, seem, in their conduct, to have no creed at all, beyond a conviction that pleasure is pleasant, and that money will purchase it. Political corruption grows up; sharp practice in trade grows up—dishonest speculations, short weights and measures, and adulteration of food. The commercial and political Protestant world, on both sides of the Atlantic, has accepted a code of action from which morality has been banished; and the clergy have for the most part sate silent, and occupy themselves in carving and polishing into completeness their schemes of doctrinal salvation. They shrink from offending the wealthy members of their congregations. They withdraw into the affairs of the other world, and leave the present world to the men of business and the devil. For the working purposes of life, they have allowed the Gospel to be superseded by the new formulas of political economy. This so-called science

is the most barefaced attempt that has ever yet been openly made on this earth to regulate human society without God or recognition of the moral law. The clergy have allowed it to grow up, to take possession of the air, to penetrate schools and colleges, to control the action of legislatures, without even so much as opening their lips in remonstrance.

Imagine Knox, or Calvin, or Latimer coming back to us again. To what would they address themselves? To the settling doctrinal differences between Ritualist and Evangelical; Broad Churchman and Socinian; Episcopalian and Independent? Or to the cynical complacency with which the very existence of a God is discussed as a problem of speculation; with which the principle of Cain is enunciated as the elementary axiom of life, that man is his own keeper and not his brother's; that his first duty is to himself; that the supreme object of his existence is to make his fortune, and enjoy himself in this life—

Quam minime credulus futuræ?

I once ventured to say to a leading Evangelical preacher in London that I thought the clergy were much to blame in these matters. If the diseases of society were unapproachable by human law, the clergy might at least keep their congregations from forgetting that there was a law of another kind,

which in some shape or other would enforce itself He told me very plainly that he did not look on it as part of his duty. He could not save the world, nor would he try. The world lay in wickedness, and would lie in wickedness to the end. His business was to save out of it individual souls by working on their spiritual emotions, and bringing them to what he called the truth. As to what men should do or not do, how they should occupy themselves, how and how far they might enjoy themselves, on what principles they should carry on their daily work—on these and similar subjects he had nothing to say.

I needed no more to explain to me why Evangelical preachers were losing their hold on the more robust intellects: or why Catholics, who at least offered something which at intervals might remind men that they had souls, should have power to win away into their fold many a tender conscience which needed detailed support and guidance.

SECTION V.

WEAKNESS OF CERTAIN POSITIONS ADOPTED BY PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS.

The Reformers of the sixteenth century were contending against definite falsehoods, which had been

taken up into the system of the Church of Rome, and were offered by it to the world as sacred realities. Purgatory, penance, pilgrimages, masses, the worship of the saints—supported by and in turn supporting the monastic orders, which had become themselves unendurably corrupt, these and their kindred superstitions the Reformers denounced as frauds and impostures. They declared the established service of the Church to be the practice and worship of a lie. They appealed to the Bible as an authority which Catholics themselves acknowledged. With the Bible in their hands they pointed from the idolatrous ceremonial to the spiritual truths contained in the Gospels and Epistles, and the service which man owed to his Maker they affirmed to be integrity of heart and purity of life and conduct.

They insisted on faith as the ground of acceptance, because faith was the spirit out of which acceptable obedience rose as the plant rises from the seed, because mechanical obedience rising from selfish hope or selfish fear was not obedience at all. But it is dangerous to take passionate language, and in cool blood construct out of it a positive article of a new theology. Even in the lifetime of St. Paul, justification by faith only was construed into a sanction of Antinomianism. It has been the excuse and the

apology of modern preachers, who have allowed religion to decline from a rule of conduct into a thing of emotion and opinions.

Again, intense piety, when it reflects on the Divine nature, perceives and feels that it is all-pervading, all-controlling, absolute and incapable of change, existing in its immutable essence from eternity to eternity. To that which is all-powerful there can be no rival or enemy; hence the conviction that all things are and must be predetermined by the Divine will. The will which appears to us free in man is but apparent only. A will which is really free can exist only in the Being which is self-originated.

Nevertheless, it is no less plain that there is in the constitution of things something good that is to be infinitely loved; something also that is evil to be infinitely hated—a spirit opposed to God, however it comes into being—eternally cut off from Him, and the subject, therefore, of eternal reprobation. God, it may be said, has made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of wrath—but how or why is impossible to say.

All these positions are severally true—justification by faith, predestination, and reprobation—yet they are fitting objects of meditation only to the pro-

found intensity of devotion in which alone they can be harmonised. It is dangerous, it is worse than dangerous, to take these high mysteries which require us to be lifted out of ourselves before they can be even faintly comprehended, to formularise them deliberately into propositions, and in catechisms and theological articles thrust them on the conscience as something which it is necessary to believe. To represent man as an automaton, sinning by the necessity of his nature, and yet as guilty of his sins —to represent God as having ordained all things, yet as angry with the actions of the puppets whom He has Himself created as they are—is to insist on the acceptance of contradictory assertions from which the reason recoils—to make Christianity itself incredible by a travesty of Christian truth.

An error yet more mischievous has been the Protestant treatment of the Bible. The Canon of Scripture was at the Reformation received by the Church as universally true. No serious question had been raised about it since the Canon was fixed. No internal difficulties had been discovered in any of its parts. Historical criticism had not yet come into existence. But, again, the superstitious and magical theory of the Bible had not come into existence either. The sacred books contained the records of the faith:

they were the lively oracles of God, and as such were regarded with a special, if undefined, reverence.

The Reformers, appealing from the Church to the Bible, finding in the Bible the true nature of religion which the Church had obscured, finding there utterances so profound and awful as to pierce their very hearts, spoke naturally of it as the one source of truth. The Bible was to be the religion of Protestants. From an Infallible Church they appealed to the Infallible Book. Yet, as before, it proved dangerous to erect words, which were more the expressions of emotion than of intellectual conviction, into dogmatic statements of fact. Just as with the sacraments—symbolic rites were turned to idols, so the inspiration of the Bible was interpreted into the mechanical dictation by the Holy Spirit of every word and letter. Pretensions were advanced for it, which only once, if ever, it appears to advance for itself, and that in a single ambiguous text. The Bible contains the literature of a nation who, more clearly than any other nation, were allowed to perceive their dependence on their Maker and Master in Heaven But like Him of whom it is said that He increased in wisdom and stature, it is evident that the Jews were not exempt from the conditions under which all people have grown from childhood to

maturity. They were carried through the usual stages of infancy, youth, manhood, and decline. Childhood, with its innocent piety; youth, with its impetuosity; manhood, with its regal vigour; and afterwards, worldliness and luxury. Accompanying all these stages is a literature, corresponding precisely to what we have experienced in nations growing under the common conditions, not excluding even the scepticism to be found in Ecclesiastes and certain of the Psalms, where it would seem even to a sovereign of the chosen people, that there was one event alike to all, to the good and the bad, the wise and the foolish; and so far as was visible in the common current of human things, the hand of God was not apparent in them at all. In the whole series of the books which form the Old Testament—historical, legislative, lyrical, or prophetic—there is manifest, throughout, the peculiarly human element which so fits them to be the instructors of humanity. Every age, every mood of mind, is represented there with its distinguishing features; God, as the apostle says, making Himself known to his people, 'at divers times and in divers manners.'

It is to rob the Bible of its instructiveness, it is to leave us bewildered before a phenomenon too intricate either for our reason or our imagination, to

assume that in these 'divers manners' the Holy Spirit was using historians and evangelists, prophets and apostles, as mere machines It is to leave us confronted with contradictions of which, on this hypothesis, we can find no tolerable explanation, with opposing statements which no skill can reconcile; with the repudiation in one book of the temper and spirit of another. Yet this is what Protestants have done, and are doing still. They insist on the verbal correctness of every word and sentence. They have committed the truths of Christianity to a theory of their own creation, and when they find themselves in difficulties they fall back on sophistry. The six days of the creation are defined precisely by the writer of the Book of Genesis. The period between evening and morning could have been meant only for a day in the ordinary sense of the word. Science proves unanswerably that the globe has grown to its present condition through an infinite series of ages; and Protestant theologians, entangled with their own fancies, have imagined that 'day' may signify a million, billion, or quintillion of years. Construing literally the vehement expression of St. Paul, they have insisted that death originated in Adam's sin. They are confronted with evidence that death has reigned through all creation from the earliest period,

of which the stratified rocks preserve the record. They hesitate, they equivocate, they struggle against the light, they do anything save make a frank confession of their own error.

Critics again demonstrate that more than one book of the Old Testament is of later date than tradition has assigned to it; that glosses have crept into the text; that no miracle has been wrought to preserve the sacred literature from the same accidents to which other ancient records have been exposed. There was a time when faith was stronger than it is now, and good Protestants were not afraid of truth. Why can they not still recognise that this name of Protestant implies that they are soldiers of truth, set to fight against falsehood wherever and whenever falsehood is detected? Why can they not see that they have themselves caused the unbelief which is disturbing them, by having repeated the sin which they denounced in the Catholics three hundred years ago, and having overlaid the reality of the Gospel by gratuitous assumptions of their own?

We have erected dogmas, and made idols of them. The idol falls down broken. The man of the world concludes that God Himself has been ejected from his throne, that religion is folly, and that atheism is the only reality. The conscientious and devout, per-

plexed by doubts and thirsting for certainty, take refuge in the communion which claims to speak with an authority from which there is no appeal. Weary of the hesitating utterances of Evangelical theologians, they fail to see that the Church of Rome in unchanging, not because it is in possession of the truth, but because it is impervious to it. The overbearing attitude of that Church, the insolent assumptions of it, overawe their imagination. They take it at its own estimate of itself, and make themselves over body, soul, and intellect, to be its slaves for evermore.

These are the two directions in which the minds of men are now drifting; and in these directions they will continue to drift more and more till Protestant theologians assume a nobler attitude, till they prove by their fearlessness of truth that they have a real belief, that they detest equivocation with as much heartiness as Latimer or Calvin detested it; and are not afraid, because a passing cloud intercepts the rays, that the sun has therefore dropped out of the sky.

SECTION VI.

THE ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

NOTWITHSTANDING some difficulties which embarrass them, chiefly of their own creating, the Evangelical

Churches furnish, after all, but an insignificant number of converts to Romanism compared to another reformed communion which aspires to a double character, and to be both Evangelical and Catholic.

It pleased Queen Elizabeth to arrest the spiritual revolution in England when it had run but half its course. She would not, perhaps she could not, permit what we now mean by religious liberty. She instituted a system, and intended it to be co-extensive with the empire, which would comprehend as well Catholics as Protestants, those who believed in the magical efficacy of the sacraments and those who regarded the sacraments as forms which had a flavour of the idolatrous.

She established a hierarchy, which yet should not be a hierarchy; bishops who might be called successors of the apostles, yet at the same time should be creations of her own, deriving their authority and their very breath and being from the Crown. She instituted a liturgy and articles of an analogous double composition—to Catholics assuming the complexion of the ante-Nicene Church, to Protestants embracing the most vital doctrines of the Calvinistic theology.

Neither the queen nor those who acted with her were themselves under any illusion as to the real

nature of their work. The queen, in her impatient moods, refused her prelates a higher name than Doctors; suspended, imprisoned, and threatened to unfrock them. On the other hand, she punished dissent as a crime. She insisted on conformity with an institution which she had made deliberately insincere. She fixed her eyes on the complications which lay immediately before her. She constructed her Church for a present purpose, with a conscious understanding of its hollowness. The next generation might solve its own difficulties, Elizabeth was contented if she could make her way undethroned through her own. With the artifice which was engrained in her disposition, she admitted what she knew to be false into the organisation which was to control the education of the English race; and the deadly thing has remained where she placed it, bearing its poison-laden blossoms century after century. Never has history pronounced a sterner condemnation on the experiment of tampering with truth. The bishops, as they settled into their places, assumed the airs and repeated the crimes of the prelates whom they succeeded. They constructed a theology to suit their position, and when the genuine part of the people saw through it and refused to accept it, they persecuted them till they provoked a revolt which

cost a king and an archbishop their lives, and for a time overthrew the whole constitution of their country.

The Commonwealth was followed by a reaction in which the same chain was again imposed. Spiritual institutions can be remodelled only at high temperature. When the metal is cold they can be broken, but they cannot be altered. Charles II. believed in the Anglican bishops no more than Elizabeth believed in them; but he and his friends hated the Puritans, and to be revenged on them they braced together again the dislocated pieces of Anglicanism. The reaction went so far as to encourage James to attempt the restoration of genuine Popery. The Revolution followed. The Kirk established itself in Scotland. Popery was proscribed in England and Ireland; but the same shadowy Episcopal Church maintained its form, in these two countries, unimpaired and unmodified. It was supposed to have learned its lesson; to have been made to understand, at last, that, spite of its Episcopal consecrations and its pretended priesthood, it was a Protestant institution and not a Catholic one. The body and appearance might be Catholic. The voice, when it opened its lips to teach, must be Protestant.

The Revolution had really and truly produced

some temporary effect of this kind. For a century and a half no more Romanising tendencies were heard of in England; and such life as the Church possessed was Calvinist. But the free action of the spirit was paralysed by the dead body to which it was attached. The emotions of genuine piety were choked in the utterance. Religious paralysis still prevailed over England, and more fatally over Ireland. Nepotism, Erastianism, and self-indulgence became the characteristics of the Anglican clergy; the best of them taking refuge in a stoical morality which was powerless except over the educated. It could not last. First Wesley and Whitfield rose, blowing into flame the ashes of the Reformers' theology which *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* had prevented from growing entirely cold. Afterwards followed the great Evangelical revival which spread into intellectual society, and, aided by the terrors produced by the French Revolution, checked for a time the advancing tide of materialism.

But Evangelicalism was morally timid and intellectually weak. It did not grapple boldly with the vices of society, still less with the greed of money-making, which was saturating politics with ungodliness. The reviving earnestness of the nineteenth century demanded something which it described as

deeper and truer than had satisfied the preceding generation. The insincerity of Elizabeth and her advisers had yet to bear its last and deadliest fruits.

Forty years ago a knot of Oxford students, looking into the Constitution of the Church of England, discovered principles which, as they imagined, had only to be acted on to restore religion to the throne of the empire. With no historical insight into the causes which had left these peculiar forms in the stratification of the Church like fossils of an earlier age, they conceived that the secret of the Church's strength lay in the priesthood and the sacraments; and that the neglect of them was the explanation of its weakness. The Church of England so renovated would rise, they thought, like Achilles from his tent: clad in celestial armour, it would put to flight the armies of infidelity, and bring back in a modern shape, adapted to modern needs, the era of Hildebrand and Becket. They and only they stood on ground from which they could successfully encounter atheism. They and they only, as tracing their lineage through imposition of hands to the apostles, could meet and vanquish the pretensions of Rome.

Singular imagination! The battle which ensued is not yet over, but the issue of it has long ceased to be uncertain. Of the conflict with materialism, these

gentlemen made less than the Evangelicals had made. Materialism is sweeping over the intellect of the age like a spring tide, continually on the rise. They did not conquer Rome. The ablest of them, after all their passionate denials, were the first to see that if their principles were sound, the Reformation had been a crime; and that they must sue for admission into the bosom of their true mother. They submitted; they were received; they and the many who have followed them have been the most energetic knights of the holy war; they have been the most accomplished libellers of the institution in which they were born. The Anglican regiment, which pretended to be the most effective against the enemy in the whole Protestant army, is precisely the one which has furnished and still furnishes to that enemy the most venomous foes of the English Church and the largest supply of deserters.

What these gentlemen have really accomplished is the destruction of the Evangelical party in the Established Church. While the most vigorous of the Anglo-Catholics have gone over to the Papacy, the rest have infected almost the entire body of the Episcopal clergy with principles which seem to add to their personal consequence. The youngest curate affects the airs of a priest. He revives a counterfeit

of the sacramental system in which he pretends to have a passionate belief. He decorates his altar after the Roman pattern; he invites the ladies of his congregation to confess to him and whispers his absolutions; and having led them away from their old moorings, and filled them with aspirations which he is unable to gratify, he passes them on in ever-gathering numbers to the hands of the genuine Roman, who waits to receive them.

The Episcopal Church of England, with its collateral branches in this and other countries, no longer lends strength to the cause of Protestantism. It is the enemy's chief depot and recruiting-ground. The ascendency which it enjoys through its connection with the State; the exclusive possession of the old cathedrals and parish churches; the tradition that hangs about it that dissent is vulgar, and that to be an Anglican, if not a Papist, is essential to being a gentleman, are weapons in its hands which it uses with fatal ingenuity. The Dissenters themselves are not proof against the baneful influence which is extending even into their own borders. To those who have eyes to see, there is no more instructive symptom of the age than the tendency of Presbyterian, Independent, and even Unitarian clergy to assume a sacerdotal dress and appearance. Their fathers in-

sisted that between laymen and ministers there was no difference but in name, and they carried their protest into the outward costume. The modern ministers form themselves into a caste. They display their profession in the collars of their coats; whether they are Roman or Genevan can be learned only on particular inquiry. Their fathers ejected from their chapels the meretricious ornaments so dear to sentimental devotionalism. The bare walls seemed to say, in their stern simplicity, that no lies should be spoken or acted within them. Now each chapel must have its delicately-moulded arches, its painted windows, its elaborate music. The exterior of an Independent meeting-house is no longer a symbol of the doctrine which is still preached from its pulpits. We enter, and we are still uncertain where we are, till we study the construction of the East End—and even the still blank East End suggests in its form the idea of the not distant altar and sacrificing priest.

SECTION VII.

FRANCE.—LOUIS NAPOLEON.

Of all countries in both hemispheres, France is the peculiar boast of the Roman Catholic reactionaries. France, the eldest child of the Church, has returned,

after her revolutionary orgies, to the feet of her true mother. France is once more the chosen Knight of the Cross. The unbeliever and the heretic are invited to bend with awe and admiration before the majestic and confounding spectacle. The overwhelming disasters which have overtaken her are really but the most decisive indications of the favour with which she is regarded by Providence. She is suffering, but she suffers in mercy to expiate the sins of her fathers. She suffers as a discipline to purify and reinvigorate her for the magnificent work which she is yet to achieve.

Let us look a little closer at this phenomenon. In the sixteenth century, France, like other countries, was stirred to its heart by the Reformation. The noblest part of her made a splendid effort; but the baser elements proved too strong to be overthrown. The Huguenots were destroyed by war and massacre; the offer of salvation having been once rejected was not repeated, and light, when it came again, came in the form of lightning, the guillotine, and the Reign of Terror. The fatal work was not accomplished at once. Henry of Navarre, when he conformed to the Church of Rome, confessed in doing so that he had no religion at all. Yet he retained so much of his early training that he continued tolerant, and neither practised nor permitted persecution

Even under Richelieu, France supported Protestant Germany against Rome and Austria, and the Gallican liberties remained an evidence that she was not yet wholly enslaved. But the Gallican liberties died away. France became in the last century as submissively orthodox, and as debased in becoming so, as the most devoted Romanist could desire. The debauchery of her prelates was an astonishment even in the most profligate of European courts. The nobles sank into the most barbarous tyrants that ever preyed on the industry of the poor, and when conscience awoke at last and found a voice in Voltaire, it confounded religion with the counterfeit, which had usurped its name and place, and declared Christianity itself to be a worn-out fable. The nation whose weakness and superstition had consented to and caused these degradations caught the cry and echoed it. The Revolution came. Kings, nobles, priests, churches, all were overwhelmed; and the altar of reason, with Bishop Talleyrand for a hierophant, was a fitting sequel of the recall of the Edict of Nantes.

The Revolution cleared the air. With the spiritual poison flung violently out, with lies at last gibbeted as lies, if there was little positive truth, the French people recovered energy and courage. The splendid successes of the revolutionary generals showed

how strong men may become, however uncelestial the light which is burning in them, when they have the spirit to rise in revolt against palpable imposture. Napoleon came, compounded of the hero and the quack. He turned France into an empire. He considered himself a second Charlemagne. He was to be liege lord of Europe, and other princes were to reign as his vassals. The Church was willing to become the handmaid of his ambition; and, too ignoble to understand that the strength of nations lies in their representing some kind of truth, Napoleon made his concordat with the Pope. He re-established the Catholic religion in a humiliated form. An army of priests in the churches was to supplement his army in the field, and equally to look to him for its orders. 'Is it not splendid?' he said to one of his marshals when the first High Mass was again celebrated in Notre Dame. 'Very splendid!' growled the marshal turning away in scorn. 'It needs only the half million men to be here who have lost their lives to get rid of all that to make it perfect.'

Imposture and vanity ran their course hand in hand till the great image with its feet of clay was at last prostrated. The Bourbons came back, and the Church, on the fall of Napoleon, recovered still more of its lost power. Again a revolution. Louis

Philippe followed, and the Liberals regained their feet; but no sign appeared in them of reviving piety after a Puritan or Huguenot type. A literature rose, on the contrary, of which Balzac, Eugene Sue, and Madame Sand were the chief priests and priestesses —a literature so debasing, so vile, so detestable, so completely saturated with intellectual and spiritual unmanliness, that 'Candide' and 'La Pucelle' are wholesome reading in comparison.

The soul-poisoning was accompanied remarkably with material progress, and the result shows how much this much-vaunted material progress is worth when it means only that great employers of labour are to pile up fortunes and live in splendour on the appropriation of the wages of the artisan. After eighteen years there was a revolution once more; and this time there was to be no mistake. The millennium was to come in earnest. Labour was to have its rights; all men were to have their fair share in the profits of their toil, each according to his desert. One thing only was wanting—an indispensable thing, yet the absence of which occurred to no one—that before a millennium could come there must be a renewal of what used to be called a fear of God.

A year ensued of murderous battles in the streets,

and the hero of the new period then came forward upon the stage. Another Napoleon—nephew, so called, of the great uncle, but with no better title than his mother's word to the name which he bore—a man who had twice attempted to make a civil war in France in his own interest, had twice escaped the scaffold to which a healthier age would have assigned him with the general approbation of mankind, crawled into the Presidency of the Republic under the shelter of his name. By perjury twice repeated, and the murder of some thousands of innocent people, he opened himself a way to the Imperial throne. He imposed on the peasantry. He debauched the army. He took to his heart on one side the commercial swindlers of the Bourse to manage his finances for him. He flung himself, on the other, upon the Pope and the Catholic Church; and the Pope and the Catholic Church received their new champion with characteristic benedictions. The Tuileries and the Elysée became the scenes of the most boundless self-indulgence, tinctured with the rose-pink of sentimental piety. Elegant abbés hung about the cabinet of the empress or the boudoirs of the ladies-in-waiting, like fashionable doctors round the couches of the *malades imaginaires*. And thus set in under the patronage of the Empress Eugénie the wonderful

Catholic reaction which we are to recognise as so manifestly divine.

French society, after its course of Balzac and Madame Sand, sighed for a less dangerous diet. Too enervated for wholesome food, the Parisians found what they needed in the emotional pseudo-piety in which they could indulge in the intervals of their vices. A religious literature sprung up in the same key as the literature of adultery. The modern Catholic Sentimental Novel is the growth of the same hotbed which produced 'Indiana' and the 'Scènes de la Vie Privée,' being, perhaps, however, one degree more detestable from the sacred names and associations which are made to show themselves in that poison-loaded atmosphere. The emperor corrupted the honour of the army. The fathers confessors corrupted the souls of the educated classes. The people, being kept in order, as it was called, by despotism, throve and made money, raising a harvest, however, to be gathered by others. Truth, honour, patriotism, manliness, every virtue which ennobles humanity, withered at the root; while the Church prospered upon a system of wholesale lying which revived the worst impostures of the Middle Ages. The disorders of France appeared specially to require the interposition of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin,

therefore, as a *Dea ex machinâ*, has been ready any moment for the last twenty years to put her hand to the work. Eleven years ago, in a tour in the South, I saw a party of Sisters passing through the street. I inquired who they were. I was told that shortly before the Virgin had appeared to a neighbouring curé, and had directed him to announce as her pleasure that money must be subscribed, and a convent built on a spot which she named. The curé delivered his message in his chapel. The money came in, the ground was given, the house was built and filled. Again, Our Lady came, expressed herself pleased, but required now another and a larger house. This, too, was erected by the same means, and was thriving vigorously when I last heard of it.

The story of Our Lady of Salette is notorious to all the world. Two children declared that the Virgin had shown herself to them on the mountain-side. Their tale was examined into by competent persons, and was declared to be idle nonsense. The Pope and bishops thought differently, and the pious mind of France listened to the Church. A magnificent shrine rose on the scene of the marvellous vision, and devout countesses and effeminate counts stream from all quarters thither, to contribute their offerings and pay their humble adorations.

And what was the result of all this? The Catholic Church was agitated at the reconstruction of the German Empire under a Protestant dynasty; and the emperor was tempted to strike a blow at it before it had consolidated itself. Never has the world seen a retribution so instant and so tremendous. The 'Man of December' was hurled from his throne, after covering himself with infamy. Had one glimmer of manhood survived in him, he would have ridden among the grapeshot at Sedan, and have died though he could not live with honour. He preferred inglorious decrepitude in the luxury of an English country-house. The Imperial generals behaved like fools or traitors, and clouded the glory of their country by undergoing the most shameful defeat which ever befell a European army. The Pope, the chief offender, forfeited his temporal sovereignty. The dreaded Italian kingdom became a complete and an established fact. His Holiness was enclosed in the Vatican, and Protestant Germany was made the central stone of the arch in the new organization of the Continent.

Such is the fruit of the Catholic revival of France. This is what we are called on to admire. 'Who,' to use the words of John Knox, 'who that has a spunk of godliness in his heart,' can fail rather to see in

this great overthrow the Divine retribution upon unveracity? God is neither dead nor sleeping. Now as ever the Avenger is on the watch.

SECTION VIII.

GERMANY.

As the present state of France is the measure of the value of the Catholic revival, so Northern Germany, spiritually, socially, and politically, is the measure of the power of consistent Protestanism. Germany was the cradle of the Reformation. In Germany it moves forward to its manhood; and there, and not elsewhere, will be found the intellectual solution of the speculative perplexities which are now dividing and bewildering us. The truthfulness, the manliness, and simplicity which characterise so specially the German race, were incarnated in their highest form in the miner's son who headed the original revolt. Luther, like all very great men, was essentially single-minded. He did not attempt, like Calvin, to form religion into an institute, and shape the system of it into dogmatic perfection. Where he was ignorant, he acknowledged his ignorance. What he saw clearly to be false, he denounced as false and flung away. But he did not

far outstrip the insight of the generation to which he belonged; and he was its guide because he was its representative. The mechanical theory of the mass was hateful to him, for it was inconsistent with the honour due to the Almighty. The mystic virtue of the priesthood was incredible to him. He saw priests to be liars, impostors, and sensualists, and he refused to believe that such men as those could be spiritual rulers whom God had appointed for mankind.

But in an age when magic was universally held to be a real power, he saw no reason for denying that the desire of the believer to unite himself with his Saviour might work a change in the eucharistic elements. He took the words of Christ literally. He would not venture to assume a metaphor without positive ground.

He translated the Bible; and in translating it he created the modern German language as an instrument of literature. He impregnated the minds of the German people with light, and life, and piety, and reverence. He was a man of genius in the noblest sense, and looked into nature with the eyes of a man who was at once a believer in God, and a poet, and a philosopher. Luther was the root in which the intellect of the modern Germans took its rise. In the spirit of Luther their mental development has gone

forward ever since. The seed changes its form when it develops leaves and flowers. But the leaves and flowers are in the seed, and the thoughts of the Germany of to-day lay in germs in the great reformer. Thus Luther has remained through later history the idol of the nation whom he saved. The disputes between religion and science, so baneful in their effects elsewhere, have risen into differences there, but never into quarrels. There has been no passionate repudiation of Luther, as Cranmer and Latimer have been repudiated by English Liberals and High Churchmen. Luther's memory is enshrined in the German heart, and his hymn is the battle-song with which the German legions still advance to victory.

Luther believed in truth with all his soul. He understood, as few others have understood, that truth will make us free—truth and nothing else. There was no patching up in Luther's workmanship of institutions and doctrines which were felt to be false for personal convenience ; no politic handling of exploded lies to make the functions of the State work easily. Therefore, being true to himself, he has been held in honour by all who have loved truth as he loved it, though they may have travelled far beyond the boundaries which, in Luther's day, were held to circumscribe the scope of human vision or speculation.

As Luther studied always how to sift the false from the true, so those who have come after him have imitated the noble example. Other Protestant bodies have clung to the letter of the Bible; have made it into an idol; have considered that they discharged a religious duty when each day they spelt mechanically through a chapter of it. The Germans have set themselves, with all their might, to *understand* the Bible, and to learn all that can be known about it. They have laboured, as no other scholars have done, to obtain the exact text. They have sifted the evidence for the date and origin of each book. They have searched, with microscopic minuteness, through the huge folios of the Greek and Latin fathers. They have studied the corresponding literature of the East as a key to the Biblical language; from the stone and picture writing of Egypt and Assyria, to the philosophy born of the intermarriage of Asiatic and Grecian thought. The criticisms and essays of Ewald alone threw more light on the obscure passages of the Jewish Scriptures than all the dissertations of the scholastic divines, all the unnumbered Commentaries which have been produced by the industry of English and American Protestants from the seventeenth century to the present hour. Others have looked into the sacred texts for types of, or allusions to, their own peculiar

doctrines; the Germans have looked rather for the meaning that was in the mind of the writer; and in their boldest innovations on popularly received opinions, they have shown a more real appreciation of the nature and value of the Bible than those who have only studied it for confirmation of theories which they were already determined to believe; who, being unfurnished with the rudiments of exact or real knowledge, have endeavoured to force conclusions by clamour which they have been unable to justify with argument.

There is something touchingly beautiful in the passion with which English and American Protestant divines cling to the letter of the Bible. It is an unconscious perception that in this Book, in some form or other, lies the solution of the enigma of existence. Their fault has been that they have assumed without reason that, while the truth is there, any one who can read will find it there; that it is as intelligible to the unlearned as the learned. They have seen in the Bible the meaning which their eyes brought with them. They have, I repeat, made the Bible into an idol. Their theories, being the work of their own minds, mortal like themselves, though dignified by the name of eternal verities, recoil on them, as superstitions always recoil, through the natural ex-

pansion of knowledge. The ground slips under their feet; religion loses its grasp. Materialism takes hold of philosophy; corruption takes hold of politics; speculative money-making and vulgar ambition, of the individual souls of the millions. They look on bewildered and helpless, while the Popery, which had been lying so long prostrate under the blows of the Reformation, lifts its unsightly limbs out of the grave, walks erect, and flings its shadow over the world once more.

Protestant Germany stands almost alone, with hands and head alike clear. Her theology is undergoing change. Her piety remains unshaken. Protestant she is; Protestant she means to be. She has no philosophic radicals to hold out their hands to Jesuitism. Consistent in practice and in theory, she has gone on from strength to strength. The first to do justice to the peasantry, and to solve the problem of the division of the land without dissolving the national organisation, Prussia has found an answer to the hardest political riddles; while nations who fancied themselves far ahead of her in the freedom of their institutions are looking at her now with dismay and perplexity. By the mere weight of superior worth, the Protestant States have established their ascendency over Catholic Austria and Bavaria, and

compel them, whether they will or not, to turn their faces from darkness to light. North German literature has penetrated wherever the language is spoken. The educated Austrian feels the spell of Goethe and Schiller; Kant and Herder, Schleiermacher and Ewald, are too strong for Jesuit casuistry. German religion may be summed up in the word which is at once the foundation and the superstructure of all religion —Duty! No people anywhere, or at any time, have understood better the meaning of duty; and to say that is to say all. Duty means justice, fidelity, manliness, loyalty, patriotism; truth in the heart and truth in the tongue. The faith which Luther himself would have described as the faith that saved, is faith that beyond all things and always truth is the most precious of possessions, and truthfulness the most precious of qualities; that where truth calls, whatever the consequence, a brave man is bound to follow.

This is real Protestantism. Knowledge grows; belief expands; the facts of one age are seen by the next to have been no facts, but creatures of imagination. The sincere Protestant accepts the new revelation; he piously abandons what God has taught him to recognise as error, and he gathers strength by his fidelity. The insincere Protestant, forgetting the meaning of the names under which he was enlisted

in the war against falsehood, closes his eyes, and clings to his formulas. Therefore, like St. Peter failing through want of faith, he finds the ground turn to water under his feet. His mortal eye grows dull. His tongue learns to equivocate. From his pulpit, week by week, he delivers mechanically the husk of his message. The seed falls out on ground which each day is strewn more thick with stones; while the world on one side, and Popery on the other, are dividing the practical control over life and conduct.

North Germany, manful in word and deed, sustains the fight against both the enemies, and carries the old flag to victory. A few years ago another thirty years' war was feared for Germany. A single campaign sufficed to bring Austria on her knees. Protestantism, as expressed in the leadership of Prussia, assumed the direction of the German Confederation; and, while occupied with her internal organisation, Prussia found herself assailed with the most vindictive determination by France. Furious at the defeat of Austria, hating and dreading the supremacy of a Protestant power, the Jesuits had driven France into the field to destroy it. Instead of breaking down Germany, France was herself shattered as a wave shatters itself against a rock;

and the greatest of modern crimes was punished with the most tremendous retribution.

The sword failing them, the Roman ecclesiastics betake themselves to other weapons. They intrigue; they refuse obedience to the law. They cover disaffection behind pleas of conscience, and appeal for sympathy to mankind in the name of religious liberty. The German Government, as little moved by clamour as by force, replies steadily that every German subject, Catholic or Protestant, shall submit to the law; while free England and free America, divided into parties which covet alike the support of the Catholic vote, and having lost the power of distinguishing between realities and formulas, affect to think that the Jesuits are an innocent and an injured body, and clamour against Prince Bismarck's tyranny. Surely we are an enlightened generation.

SECTION IX.

FORMS OF MORAL DISORDER GENERATED IN MODERN SOCIETY.

In the absence of the more spiritual interests which in other ages have occupied the intellect of liberal commonwealths, the pursuit of wealth has in our

modern world for many years become more and more absorbing. We still hear at school of the *Auri sacra fames*, the *scelerata insania*, or the fable of Midas. We listen in church with formal assent when the love of money is denounced as the root of all evil. But we hold practically that this language has ceased to be applicable to the conditions of modern society. Energetic men are ambitious and desire to excel. The only road by which they can now rise to pre-eminence lies in the accumulation of riches. Success is measured even in literature and art by the money which can be made out of them.

Social and political complications lie visibly ahead, though yet perhaps at some distance, resulting from this tendency, which may bring home to us the truth of an experience which, we have flattered ourselves, cannot be ours. The principles are understood on which money can be gathered together. The principles are yet to be found on which money can be justly distributed. Wealth of all kinds represents labour. It is produced by the labour of somebody. If one man secures too large a share of it, another has to be content with too small a share; and when the large shares fall to men who do not work and the small shares to those who do, there arise discontent, clamour, and mutiny.

Hereafter, possibly or certainly, the dissatisfaction will assume a practical form. For the present, the moral restraints are still felt which are inherited from other times. In America the unoccupied lands form a safety-valve. In the old world, emigration answers an analogous end. And unless some 'idea' arises in the masses which may become the article of a creed, generations may pass before the problem will become dangerous. Meanwhile, the actual conditions, as they now exist, and will probably long continue to exist, are producing an evil of another kind which attracts less attention than it deserves.

The natural and healthy condition of man is one in which he works for what he receives. Those who contribute nothing to the general stock ought to take nothing from it. The accumulation of capital in private hands is creating, in continually enlarging numbers, a class of persons who have abundant means to spend on themselves, while they have nothing to do in return. A man makes a fortune, as it is called; he leaves it to his children, who find themselves to have inherited the services of an army of genii, potent as those of Aladdin's lamp, to minister to their pleasures. Fools spend their share on indulgence. Indulgence is usually synonymous with vice; and as long as their purses hold out they

do mischief to every one who comes near them. This kind of thing happily does not often last long. The money is soon gone, and there is an end of it. But the majority have sense enough to avoid ruining themselves by extravagance. They live on their incomes, ladies especially, and, having their time to themselves, and being spared the necessity of exertion, are considered as exceptionally happy — yet happy they cannot be. Satisfaction of mind is allotted by Providence only to industry; and not being obliged to be industrious, they lose the capacity for it. Enjoyments pall on them. Having allowed the period of life to pass unused when occupations can be successfully learnt, they are unable to take their places afterward on the beaten roads of life. They stray into fancy employments; they become dabblers in politics, dabblers in art, dabblers in literature and science. Nothing succeeds with them sufficiently to put them on good terms with themselves; and then men and women alike, and particularly the better sort of them, being without wholesome work, and craving for something which will satisfy the demands which their minds are making on them, they fly to the opiates and anodynes of the quack doctors of the spiritual world.

I know not how it may be in America, but in

England and France there are multitudes of half-educated persons, possessing, to their misfortune, sufficient means to subsist on without working, who thus lapse into the condition which I describe. They form a class which tends to exist of necessity as long as the present relation between capital and labour survives; and among them, as from a compost, arise the poisonous spiritual exhalations of which so many round us are sickening. These are the persons who, having nothing better to which to put their hands, take to mesmerism and consulting the dead through rapping tables. When mesmerism palls on them, they turn to Romanism, which is its intellectual counterpart, but veiled with a show of piety and a semblance of decency.

In the past generation there was an attempt to make Evangelicalism serve the purpose. The resolution of religion into emotion, the negation of the value of work, the contemplation of the scheme of salvation, with a certain quantity of devotional reading, partially supplied the craving of the empty and hungry soul. But the Evangelical creed is too near the truth to serve as an anodyne for mental disease. In its robuster forms, it is the spur of energy and the companion of industry. The effort to transmute Protestantism into feeling and sentiment

has happily been a decisive failure, and the spoilt and indolent children of the unwholesome side of civilisation find an element infinitely more agreeable to them in the incense-laden atmosphere and the languid litanies of the Catholic chapels. In England certainly, perhaps elsewhere, thousands of ardent souls without the resource of employment, and feeding upon themselves, have turned from the unsatisfying pietism of Hannah More and Wilberforce to the system which is so happily organised to meet their own necessities.

They want occupation. It is thrust into their hand. The priest presents them with a round of duties which will keep every segment of the day employed. Attendance at mass and vespers, reading the hours at the fitting intervals, special acts of penance or special somethings on which the mind can dwell. The confessor attends like a physician to the spirit's disorders, listens with consoling sympathy to the tale of disquiet, and is ready with his hemlock juice when the pain becomes intense. Is there a complaint that God will not let Himself be seen? He is present eternally on the Catholic altars, amidst the enchanted light which steals through painted windows and the celestial music which imitates the choirs of the archangels. In the bedroom or closet at home, the Virgin gazes lovingly from the walls;

a crucifix stands concealed behind folding-doors, to be looked on only in the most elevated or exquisite moments. Nature, the sovereign physician, bids us let our wounds alone, live healthily, do right, and leave the rest to her. The confessor understands the value of the open sore. He knows that a soul when cured of its pain will no longer need his aid, and insists on a continued repetition of a torturing self-examination which will make recovery impossible.

Thus the life is filled up. The victims of delusion lavish the money which they ought never to have possessed on the system in which they are absorbed; and chapels rise and cathedrals, and they dream that they are doing service to God.

The money at least is a reality, and rebuilds the fallen shrines of the old imposture. The labour of some poor industrious man, in some far part of the world, stolen from him by a cunning capitalist, is applied to a purpose which the true owner would have probably despised and abhorred; but, rightly or wrongly, the purpose of the hierarchy is served, and the proud structures rise, which, in turn, enchant the imaginations of the stupid multitude.

So long as the existing organisation of human society continues, so long the class out of which recruits are furnished to the various armies of folly and

falsehood will multiply. Nature will provide a remedy in time; but nature, when she interferes, more often destroys the patient than cures the evil from which he suffers. Natural remedies, if we wait for them, come in the shape of socialism, communism, and revolutionary outbreaks.

Let the Protestant ministers look to it. They are at present the sole surviving representatives of true religion in the world, and they have allowed their lights to burn terribly dimly. Religion is the wholesome ordering of human life; the guide to furnish us with our daily duties in the round of common occupation; the lamp to light us along our road and to show us where to place our steps. If instead of using the light to see our way with in the darkness, we gaze into the light itself, the eye turned inward will see at most only the structure of its own spiritual retina; while the owner of the eye will plunge headlong into the nearest ditch, or wander off the path into the wilderness.

SECTION X.

MODERN LITERATURE AND MODERN EDUCATION.

To expressions of alarm at the progress of Romanism it is generally answered that society is sufficiently

secured by the modern system of education. I am unable to agree in that opinion. I do not believe that what we at present mean by education is a guarantee against the Roman or any other superstition. From the criticisms which have appeared in the English and American periodical press any time these twenty years, one would infer that during this period there have been at least a dozen novelists more humorous than Sterne and more pathetic than Richardson; as many historians and philosophers who were eclipsing Gibbon and Hume; as many dramatists who, if not yet equal to Shakespeare, were easily second to him. The writings of these gentlemen flourish for the season, and are in the mouths of all men. A year or two pass, and, as David says of the ungodly, 'I went by, and lo, they were gone; I sought them, but they could not be found.' Some other idol has started up as brilliant and equally ephemeral, and the fickle world has left the old favourites for the new. The nineteenth century (or that second half of it in which our lot is at present cast) is possessed with an idea that it eclipses all the ages which have preceded it. Every goose that it produces must be a swan, relatively if not absolutely. Nevertheless fact and nature are inexorable. The goose is a goose, and not a swan. Even if the illu-

sion lasts for his life, and conducts him to a grave in Westminster Abbey, his emptiness finds him out, and the pages which were read with admiration by one generation, the next turns from with wonder at the taste that endured them. The phenomenon is partly explained by the character of modern criticism. In criticism there is a singular inversion of the rule which holds with ordinary employments. Usually the practical part of things comes first; the judicial afterward. In literature, the aspirant to fame begins upon the Bench, and when he has served his time in passing judgment on others he descends to the Bar to practise on his own account. The world follows the critic, and the critic is still an apprentice in his trade.

To any one acquainted with really great works in our own or any other language, it has long been obvious that modern books are adapted simply to modern taste, and that probably at no time has the amount of intellect or knowledge requisite for literary success been so small as at the present hour. Year after year the material becomes thinner and weaker. English popular books are not vicious like the French —at least not generally so; but, if possible, they are more utterly empty. They are constructed on the principles of homœopathy, the smallest globule of wit

being diluted with unlimited water. Yet they are such as the age requires; the public stomach is unequal to stronger diet. The mass of educated men are worked hard at business which exhausts their energy, while it makes no demand on the higher faculties of thought. Something is needed as a relaxation, something which will distract the attention, and can be read without effort; something, therefore, which will require no exertion, either of intellect or imagination.

To the general habits of men in these days, the scale of popular education is adapted. If we are proud of anything, it is our school system. We look back on the education of preceding centuries with mingled pride and shame: pride that we have left those wretched ways so far behind us; shame that we descend from ancestors so blind and negligent as to have been contented with so miserable a makeshift.

In those centuries it is true that boys and girls learnt but little; and they learnt in a fashion very unlike ours. Those of them who were intended for manual work were as early as possible apprenticed to their business. They learnt in their religion that their duty was to do their work well; they learnt by practice how to do the particular thing which they were set to do. What they were taught,

they were taught thoroughly—taught till they were become masters of their craft. Similarly in the higher schools and colleges, the intellectual student travelled over an area limited in extent. He mastered completely two languages, the most perfectly organised that have been produced by human intelligence, and in learning the languages he became so intimately acquainted with the most perfect of all literary works, that they were wrought into the texture of his mind. I go to a school in New England, where the modern system is developed in its highest completeness. I see the most admirable mechanical arrangements. I find class-rooms and classes where boys and girls of all ages, from five to twenty, are ascending step by step through all varieties of knowledge. Ancient languages and modern, science and art, history and philosophy, poetry and mathematics, music and drawing—nothing is omitted, nothing is unattempted, and progress is made in all. The senior pupils are lifted through political economy into the higher problems of statesmanship; a race in a competitive examination between a student of the old school and a student of the new is a race between a tortoise and Achilles.

Yet the experiment has now continued for a generation or two, and the fruits are less apparent

than they ought to be. A better education should have produced more vigorous original thinkers, a more elevated standard of taste, information more exact as well as more diffused, and nobler principles of action. We find instead an increased readiness to turn to any one of a hundred employments by which money can be made: a sharpness of faculty, a belief in mechanism as the ruling genius of all things, a remarkable adaptability to mechanical pursuits; but along with it not only an absence of real knowledge on nine-tenths of the subjects with which their memories have been loaded, but an absence of genuine interest in anything not convertible into dollars, an impoverishment of literary taste, while at the same time there is a conceit of knowledge on all subjects, rising from a smattering acquaintance with the surface of them, perhaps more mentally injurious than complete and conscious ignorance. People so trained read, and form and express their own opinions about everything. They are the patrons of art, and their taste is the standard of excellence. The education acts upon the literature; the literature re-acts on the education; and instead of the sinewy thoughts of the classic writers, which were strung into the minds of the older students, instead of the exact knowledge of a few excellent things which made

them understand what knowledge was, and enabled them to distinguish at a glance the charlatan from the true master, we have an infinitely extended sciolism which has no accurate acquaintance with anything, and is ready at any moment to be the dupe of confident imposture.

All ranks and all sorts are educated together. It is the boast of the United States that all her children are started fairly in the race of life, that every boy in a common school knows that he may become President of the Republic. So it was said a few years ago that every French drummer-boy knew that he carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack. Yet the knowledge does not seem to have produced a very elevating effect in the French army.

We may look down as much as we please on our grandfathers' ideas; but their notions on this subject were more rational than ours. We ought not to set before a boy the chance of becoming President of the Republic, or president of anything; we should teach him first to be a good man, and next to do his work, whatever it be, as well as it can possibly be done. It is better that a boy should learn to make a shoe excellently than to write bad exercises in half a dozen languages. The wider we make the area of superficial cultivation, the more we destroy the power

of perceiving what good cultivation means; the more we are condemning the generations which are to succeed to creative barrenness and intellectual incapacity. Our philosophy and our practice seek unconsciously the same level. Our creed about ourselves and our destiny takes the colour of the objects which we pursue with the most serious earnestness. Our men of science are fast satisfying themselves, at last, that mankind are highly developed apes. The theory has been suggested many times already. It could find no hearing while religion and intellectual culture retained their old dominion. The Gospel of St. John, the 'Antigone,' or 'Hamlet,' lie external altogether to the sphere of the ape's activity. The achievements of the nineteenth century, of which it boasts as the final efflorescence of the human soul, lie a great deal nearer to our newly-recognised kindred.

The steam-ship and the railway, the electric telegraph and the infinite multitude of kindred machineries, may easily enough be evolutions of qualities, of which we perceive the germs in many creatures beside the apes. If these are indeed our last and sublimest triumphs; if it is in the direction of these that the progress of the race is to continue, then indeed I can be content to look back with proper tenderness on my hairy ancestry. Instead of 'a little

lower than the angels,' I can bear to look on myself as 'a little higher than the apes;' and 'Pickwick' shall be as beautiful as the 'Tempest,' and Herbert Spencer more profound than Aristotle, and the electric cable of greater value to mankind than the prophecies of Isaiah or the Republic of Plato.

SEA STUDIES.

TO a man of middle age whose occupations have long confined him to the unexhilarating atmosphere of a library, there is something unspeakably delightful in a sea voyage. Increasing years, if they bring little else that is agreeable with them, bring to some of us immunity from sea-sickness. The regularity of habit on board a ship, the absence of dinner parties, the exchange of the table in the close room for the open deck under an awning, and the ever-blowing breeze which the motion of the vessel forbids to sink into a calm, give vigour to the tired system, restore the conscious enjoyment of elastic health, and even mock us for the moment with the belief that age is an illusion, and that 'the wild freshness' of the morning of life has not yet passed away for ever. Above our heads is the arch of the sky, around us the ocean, rolling free and fresh as it

rolled a million years ago, and our spirits catch a contagion from the elements. Our step on the boards recovers its buoyancy. We are rocked to rest at night by a gentle movement which soothes us into the dreamless sleep of childhood, and we wake with the certainty that we are beyond the reach of the postman. We are shut off, as in a Catholic retreat, from the worries and anxieties of the world. No *Times* upon the breakfast-table calls our thoughts to the last news from Paris or St. Petersburg, or the vehemently-expressed nothings of last night's debate in Parliament. Once, indeed, when I was crossing the Atlantic in a Cunard Steamer, the steward entered the saloon with a pile of fresh damp sheets under his arm. 'Has it come to this?' I said to myself. 'Has Yankee enterprise invaded even the ocean, and robbed us even of our ten days' respite from the leading article and the latest intelligence?' But the steward was but playing pleasantly with the spiritual appetite of the passengers. He had kept back half the stock which he had brought with him from Liverpool, and had preserved it between moistened blankets; if the reality was beyond our reach we might stay our hunger with the imaginary substitute. This was the explanation of the mystery; the waste of waters was still unconquered, and such

of us as prized our brief interval of tranquillity were left undisturbed.

I am speaking at present, however, not of the stormy passage across what the Americans call the herring pond, but of the delicious latitudes of the trades, where the water is sapphire blue, where soft airs breathe lightly on the surface, and the sharp jerk of the angry wave is never felt; where the flying fish spring from under the bows on either side of the ship like lines of spreading foam, where you sleep with your door and windows wide open, a sheet the heaviest covering which you can bear, and the air is sweet and balmy as in that far distant land where Menelaus dwells because he was the son-in-law of Zeus:

> Where never falls or rain, or hail, or snow,
> And ever off the sea the cooling breezes blow.

Here newspapers, here letters even from those who are nearest to us, are an intrusion into 'the session of sweet silent thought' which has been snatched out of the tumult of our ordinary existence. We enter the world alone, we leave it alone. There is always a part of our being into which those who are dearer to us far than our own lives are yet unable to enter. The solitary side of our nature demands leisure for reflection upon subjects on which

the dash and whirl of daily business, so long as its clouds rise thick about us, forbid the intellect to fasten itself.

The mind, nevertheless, cannot steady itself by its single strength; we require companions—but companions which intrude upon us only when we invite them: we require books, and the choice is a serious one. Of novels in the cabin library there is always a liberal supply. Passengers provide themselves with shilling and sixpenny editions, which are strewed about the benches and the hatchways, and by those whose future is still a land of hope and uncertainty are greedily perused. As we grow old, however, the class of novels which we can read with interest rapidly diminishes. The love agonies of the Fredericks and Dorotheas cease to be absorbing, as the possibilities of such excitements for ourselves have set below our horizon. At the crisis of the lovers' fortune we incline to the parental view of the situation, knowing as we do, by painful experience, the realities of the weekly bills and the rent day. A novel which can amuse us after middle life must represent such sentiments, such actions, and such casualties as we encounter after we have cut our wise teeth, and have become ourselves actors in the practical drama of existence. The taste for romance is

the first to disappear. The taste for caricature lasts longer, but eventually follows. Truth alone permanently pleases; and works of fiction which claim a place in literature must either introduce us to characters and situations which we recognise as familiar, and which would interest us if we fell in with them ourselves, or, like the adventures of the Knight of La Mancha, must play gracefully and humorously with the disappointed pursuit of those high ideals which the noblest follow longest, and which never lose their fascination for us, even when their ill success is most ridiculous.

But the best company at sea are the immortals, those on whom the endurance of their works has set the seal of excellence; which are read from age to age, from era to era, and prove, by the tenacity of their hold, their correspondence with the humanity which under all changes remains the same.

Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Horace, Virgil we never weary of, and in our later enjoyment of them we forgive and even bless the once unpleasant measures by which Greek and Latin were driven into us so indelibly. One or other of these had gone along with me over many a mile of land or ocean. When not long ago I was preparing for an expedition to South Africa I was considering

which of them should accompany me on this occasion, when I bethought me of the third great Athenian tragedian, whom at college we had been taught to despise. At school I had read the statutory four plays and forgotten them, and had never looked into Euripides since. Aristophanes had sneered at him—deans and tutors disliked his tone, and taught us to prefer the more austere grandeur of his rivals. Deans and tutors were probably right. They knew, it is likely, no more of him than we did; but they had inherited a prejudice; and prejudice on large subjects is usually a conclusion formed in earlier times by men who could give a reason for their convictions.

Yet it was evident that Aristotle greatly admired Euripides. The most critical audience that ever damned or immortalised a poet had given him a place as a dramatist on a level with the greatest masters of Athenian sculpture. To Goethe his merits as an artist appeared of the very highest order. I determined that this time I would take Euripides with me, and try to ascertain the qualities which had led at once to so marked neglect, and to an appreciation so emphatic from judges so well able to form an opinion.

On the first contact with a remarkable writer, we

often exaggerate his relative magnitude. He is for the moment closer to us than others with whom we have been long familiar; and his light eclipses them because they are for the time more distant, as the moon, the petty satellite of an insignificant planet, quenches the brilliancy of the stars. For six weeks Euripides became an enchanter for me, and the Grecian world was raised from the dead into a moonlight visibility, with softest lights, and shadows black as Erebus.

I could soon sympathise with Goethe's admiration. No great poet whose works have come down to us equals Euripides in the handling of Choric Metres. The arrangement of the words follows the thought as a musical accompaniment; now soft as the lowest breathing of an Æolian harp, now rising into a scream or leaping into the stately magnificence of the suddenly introduced hexameter. In the use of language as a musical instrument, Euripides ventured on liberties which offended the severer taste of the older school, but which, for the same reason, make his composition of peculiar interest to the modern artistic student.

The method, however, is but the result of a cause, the effects of which are broader and deeper. There is a peculiar correspondency between the tone and

feeling with which the plays are penetrated, and the thought on analogous subjects of our own age.

The Greek mind ripened rapidly in a single century. Between the expulsion of Hippias and the death of Socrates, the Athenians passed through a series of political and spiritual changes which modern Europe has scarcely accomplished in five hundred years. In the general conception of human life, in the nature of the problems with which men of intellect were occupied, Euripides is a curious interpreter of the elements which are now surrounding ourselves. We are travelling fast on lines parallel to those on which he travelled, and he is probably nearer to us to-day than he was to our fathers forty years ago. We admire the plays of Æschylus as we admire the Prophecies of Isaiah, as something beyond ourselves, something with which we are in imperfect sympathy, which defies imitation, and was possible only under intellectual conditions which lie outside our own experience. With Euripides, on the other hand, we can scarcely read a page without pausing to say, how true, how subtle, how delicate! without experiencing the agreeable surprise of meeting forms of thought and feeling which we had imagined peculiar to ourselves, expressed in language of exquisite appropriateness. We are especially conscious of

an emotion of this kind at the points where Euripides comes in contact with the established Greek Theology; and we read at these points with deeper attention, because we know that a Popular Dramatist is not representing to us his own thoughts alone, but is the interpreter of the prevailing sentiments of his age.

How far, to use an expression of Father Newman, the Greek traditional mythology was the subject of 'a real belief' among the contemporaries of Pericles, is a question to which, at this time of day, we can give no very certain answer. What is 'a real belief'? There was some belief, for an Athenian assembly voted the execution of Socrates for impiety. The sacrifice of a cock to Æsculapius shows that Socrates himself considered it decent to follow the customs of his country. Sophocles, while he touches rarely on mythological details, is profoundly reverent to the gods. Pindar, though he was fully aware how deeply fable had tinged the accredited theogonies, though he admits that it would be sin to credit the stories popularly received, yet places his hand upon his lips as if to say the gods are in heaven and we on earth, therefore let our words be few. Pindar when he sung of the birth of Athene, Phidias when he carved the ivory statue of the virgin goddess for the Parthenon, could neither of them have been distinctly conscious

of direct incredulity. Creative genius is tamed as effectively by scepticism as a bird by a broken wing; and the tendency of high intellect to bow before the invisible powers which control the existence of the material universe is sufficient generally to resist the disposition to quarrel with difficulties in detail. Once only, so far as his works have come down to us, Æschylus breaks into revolt. The Zeus or Jove of the 'Prometheus' is the 'tyrant' of Grecian politics. The supreme ruler of Olympus is represented as a malignant and cowardly usurper, trampling upon right and justice, owning no law but his own licentious passions, and careful only to keep his subjects in misery and degradation. Prometheus, a Titan of the elder generation of gods, retains the gentler feelings of the dethroned dynasty. In pity for the misery of mortals he teaches them the first rudiments of the arts, which will lift them above the level of the beasts. The jealous despot, to whom the degradation of his creatures was a pleasure of which he did not choose to be deprived, rewards the enthusiast for humanity with an agony of endless ages. Prometheus is chained to the highest peak of Caucasus, the sport of sun and storm, the vulture gnawing at his breast. Yet even then, in the midst of his sufferings, he defies the demon who may torture but cannot destroy him. Though wrong

is for the present triumphant, he holds steady to the conviction that right will conquer in the end, that there is a power in the universe stronger than Jove, and that at least, far off, yet on this side of eternity, justice is destined to prevail.

How a nation whose religious sensitiveness was so acute as to sentence Socrates to death could yet permit a drama like the 'Prometheus' to be represented and applauded on an Athenian stage, is a problem of which no satisfactory solution has ever been offered. Professor Blackie has produced lately a theory peculiar to himself, that although Prometheus may appear admirable to us, who believe in progress and the rights of man, he might have been held in less esteem by an audience of a more conservative temperament, and that we must not make Æschylus responsible for our own impieties. The play was but one of a trilogy of which the remaining parts have perished. Professor Blackie conceives that if the whole had survived we should have seen Zeus vindicated and the Titan penitent upon his knees. To this argument there is no answer. We can but judge the situation with such notions of right and wrong as we possess in our present state of moral development. We may regret that we are so far advanced upon the downhill road that we cannot help ourselves.

The inversion of moral attributes is, however, to modern eyes, complete. Not a single trait is omitted in Prometheus himself of all that to us appears the most disinterested goodness. Not a single glimpse is allowed to show itself of cloven foot or claw, while every quality which we most detest and despise is assigned with equal care to his oppressor. Every feature, we may add, is present which belonged to the tyrant of Greek tradition, the peculiar abhorrence of Republican Athens. For what purpose, save to make Zeus more hateful, was the wandering Io brought to the scene of the punishment of Prometheus? Io answers no purpose of the central play, and is connected with it by the loosest of threads. She appears only as the victim of Zeus' lust, and abandoned by him to the relentless vengeance of his no less hateful queen. It is not seriously possible to question Æschylus' real intention in this play. But it stands alone, and never afterwards, so far as we know, did he resume the defiant tone. Keble was nearer right than Professor Blackie, when he called the 'Agamemnon' the Palinodia of the 'Prometheus.' In the 'Agamemnon,' as in all his remaining dramas, the tone of Æschylus is the tone of Pindar—a tone of lofty devotion which recognises in human existence the awful workings of an all-ruling Providence,

supremely terrible, yet supremely just. Æschylus, like Goethe after him, had battled down his rebellious thoughts, content with giving one expression to them, and no longer kicked against the pricks. The truth when looked at steadily was not intolerable. It was no part of a gifted poet to destroy the faith of his fellow-citizens in the reality by tearing in pieces the traditionary costume in which it was popularly presented to them. Such an attitude a wise man will always preserve, so long as popular beliefs do more good than harm, and retain moral life in them.

But as a living genuine belief is the best of all possessions, so a dead putrefying creed is the most pernicious; and in the generation which succeeded Æschylus Greek theology had arrived at a condition when impassioned and genuine minds could no longer keep the peace with it. The traditionary mythology had grown unconsciously out of the national intellect, natural phenomena and spiritual allegories combining and crystallising in supernatural narrative. Religions which assume a definite shape are composed almost invariably of the half-understood and corrupted legends of earlier ages. They are protected against criticism by superstition, and are thus often for long periods behind rather than in advance of the moral level of the time. Mystical or strained

interpretations prevent the mischief which would arise from a literal acceptance of the dogma or tradition as it stands, and postpone the ultimately inevitable collision between reason and the creeds: but nothing can arrest the law which condemns bodies which have once been alive to corrupt when they are dead, and to spread round them pernicious and poisonous vapours, so long as misplaced reverence persists in blinding itself to their true condition. A decaying religion is accompanied always by developments of superstition, absurd or cruel; because wise men cease to concern themselves with it, and make over the whole subject to cowards and fools, knaves and enthusiasts. Such a process had actively commenced in Greece in the intellectual ferment which followed the Persian war. It continued uninterruptedly till the completion of the Roman conquest, when Paganism had become a medley of licentious rites and ghastly incredibilities. Mankind could then bear with it no more, and Christianity arose over its grave. The five centuries while the corruption was going forward witnessed a spiritual condition so intolerable that Lucretius was driven to denounce religion as the blackest curse which had ever afflicted humanity. Three hundred years before Lucretius composed those memorable lines, the in-

cipient poison had evoked a dramatic protest from the latest of the great tragedians of Athens.

The Bacchic orgies were the grossest of the new ceremonies which were bred out of the corpse of the once pure faith of Greece. Dionysus is rarely mentioned by Homer. The worship of Dionysus was introduced into Europe from the East, and was at once ingrafted upon a Greek stem. Dionysus himself was represented as of Phœnico-Grecian parentage. His mother was Semele, the daughter of Cadmus. She had the fate, like so many other ladies, of attracting the attention of the Father of the Gods, and of becoming with child by him. He had come to her disguised. She had never seen the brightness of his real presence, and persisted in a desire to behold it. Her rashness destroyed her. She perished, and her divine infant, being not yet sufficiently matured for complete birth, was concealed in his father's thigh during the remainder of the period for which he ought to have been in his mother's womb. On this wild and extravagant story were grafted the abominable rites which towards the close of the first period of Greece were intruding themselves into the service of the gods. A legend more or less was of small consequence, and might have passed without remonstrance. It was less easy to sit quiet when drunken-

ness and lust were being sanctified under the name of mysteries.

The play of the 'Bacchæ' opens with a monologue from Dionysus himself, who has appeared at Thebes, his mother's city, and demands to be adored as a god. The Thebans have hesitated to recognise his divinity. He has therefore turned the women's heads, filled them with the foulest passions, and sent them out into the forest with the queen at their head transformed into worse than beasts. The throne of Thebes is occupied by Pentheus, the impersonation of practical good sense. Pentheus hearing that a strange youth has appeared, driving women mad and calling himself a god, regards him either as some mischievous impostor or Asiatic conjurer—at any rate, as an immoral scoundrel whom it is his business as chief magistrate to arrest and punish. A being who shows his power in such fashion could not be God, nor anything like God. If he was, as he pretended, the son of Semele, the probability was that Semele had been no better than she should be, and had been deservedly burnt up for laying her bastard at Zeus's feet. He commands Dionysus to leave the State immediately under penalty of the gaol and the whip. The aged Cadmus is still living, and the prophet Teiresias also, who has supreme spiritual

authority over the Theban people. These two in most approved fashion caution Pentheus against a hasty resolution. The youth might possibly be an impostor, but it was no bad thing to have it believed that a Theban princess had borne a son to Zeus. If he was not a god it might be as well to call him so, and venture upon a pious fraud.[1]

An Athenian audience could not have missed the irony of such characteristic advice. But Pentheus is too upright to listen. He talks like an intelligent Home Secretary who is determined to repress rogues and protect public morals. Dionysus is arrested and sent to prison, but of course only to triumph. He is represented like a questionable genius out of the 'Arabian Nights,' a glorious being of irresistible power without moral attributes of any kind. The rational Pentheus is mocked, played upon, made ridiculous, led through the streets with the Thyrsus above his head to be the scorn of the citizens, and the comedy concludes in horror. He is persuaded to go out into the forest. His mother and her attendant Mænads mistake him for a wild beast, fly upon him, and rend him limb from limb; and the wretched

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[1] κ' εἰ μὴ γάρ ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς οὗτος ὥς συ φῂς·
παρὰ σοι λεγέσθω καὶ καταψεύδου καλῶς
ὥς ἐστι, Σεμελή θ' ἵνα δοκῇ θεὸν τέκειν.

woman brings his head in her lap to the palace, to recover from her drunken frenzy and find that she has destroyed her son.

The mysteries of the Cyprian Venus correspond to those of Dionysus, and the 'Bacchæ' has its parallel in the 'Hippolytus.' The 'Bacchæ' opens with a speech from Dionysus; the Prologue of the 'Hippolytus' is spoken by Kupris. She too informs us that she is a goddess, and that being a goddess she chooses to be honoured.[1]

Theseus's son, Hippolytus, she tells us, has been wanting in respect for her, and she means to be revenged. Hippolytus, a brilliant beautiful youth, is pure in spirit as in body. No sensual emotion has ever clouded for a moment the unsullied mirror of his imagination. Artemis is the goddess whom he adores, and the virgin Artemis is of all her sister divinities the most odious to the Divinity of Lust. Kupris addresses herself to her work in characteristic fashion. She inspires Phædra, Hippolytus's stepmother, with an incestuous passion for her son. Phædra, who had been a true wife to Theseus till the fiend took possession of her, struggles against temptation, abhors herself, prefers death to dishonour, and

[1] ἔνεστι γὰρ δὴ κἀν θεῶν γένει τόδε,
τιμώμενοι χαίρουσιν ἀνθρώπων ὕπο.

attempts self-destruction. A wicked old nurse persuades her that a sin is nothing so long as it is undiscovered, and is allowed to go in search of Hippolytus and bring him to her mistress's relief. Hippolytus, in dismayed surprise, bursts into expressions of indignation, which Phædra overhears; she hangs herself in rage and despair, and leaves a letter informing Theseus that Hippolytus had attempted her honour.

Posidon, Lord of the Sea, had for some previous service bestowed on Theseus the privilege of three curses. He, the God Posidon, who might be supposed to know whether the persons whom Theseus might name deserved a malediction, yet had undertaken without reserve to execute Theseus's pleasure, indifferent to desert or indesert. Theseus, in blind rage, refusing to listen to the protestations of Hippolytus, discharges one of the three bolts upon his son Posidon, true to his engagement, comes up upon the strand in front of Hippolytus's chariot in the form of a hideous monster. The terrified horses plunge among the rocks. Hippolytus is thrown out and mortally hurt, and Theseus congratulates himself on the prompt execution of the divine revenge.

Too late for any useful purpose, Artemis now appears and explains the story to him. Hippolytus

whom he had destroyed was innocent. Phædra, though in part guilty, had struggled to the best of her ability to be an honest woman, but had been driven mad. The mischief had been caused entirely by the machinations of Kupris. She would herself have interfered, but Zeus, for reasons of his own, chose to let Kupris have her way. Hippolytus is brought dying on the stage to expire in his father's arms; while Artemis flies away with a half apology that being a goddess she may not with propriety be present at a death scene.

Here, as in the 'Bacchæ,' human virtue is overborne, human tenderness is rent in pieces, human life is turned to horror and mockery by the interference of the gods with it. Kupris, a malignant devil that chose to be complimented, and resented indifference to her allurements, extends her revenge to those who had never offended her, to make it taste the sweeter. Zeus, the father of the gods, looks on approving or consenting. Artemis is forbidden to assist her own innocent votary; while Posidon, one of the three supreme deities of the Pantheon, has bound himself to do the bidding of a blind mortal, and promptly fulfils his word, though aware that the curse will recoil on the person whose wishes he is gratifying.

Imagination can scarcely conceive a group of

divine beings less deserving human reverence than the omnipotent demons who are thus described. The sentiment expressed with sad conviction by Herodotus, that the character most traceable in the gods was jealousy of human happiness, seemed to haunt Euripides as a dreadful certainty; or else he was aiming in these varied illustrations to hold them up to the incredulous detestation of his countrymen.

The same line of thought appears under a different aspect in the 'Hercules Furens.' Hercules, compelled by fate, though son of Zeus, to obey the orders of Eurystheus, descends as the last of his twelve labours to Hades to bring up the dog Cerberus. He leaves his wife, Megara, with his children in the care of Creon, king of Thebes, Megara's father. Hercules is long absent. The Theban citizens rise in revolt for liberty, self-government, the rights of man, or some similar chimera. Creon is killed. The power is seized by Lycus, a vulgar demagogue who despises Hercules as an overrated coward, supposes that he will never return, and threatens his family with destruction. The Chorus, which, with Æschylus and Sophocles, uniformly takes the pious side of things, is here less careful of its language, and observes that Zeus must be a most negligent god to beget children

and leave them to such strange disasters as he has permitted to befall Hercules. Lycus persists in his evil purpose. Megara and her children are brought out robed in black, and are about to be slaughtered, when Hercules comes back at the critical moment, destroys Lycus, and delivers them. Here an old-fashioned, commonplace drama would naturally end. The crime is designed. The victims are in the power of the villain. The knife is lifted, and is about to fall, when the saviour appears; the tyrant is struck down, and the innocents are saved. Very different from this is the issue of the 'Hercules Furens.' The rescue of the wife and children by the father is exquisitely tender; the Chorus becomingly moralises, and concludes that the gods are less unjust than they sometimes seem; but the light is only introduced to enhance the gloom which is to follow. Hercules, and Megara, and the little ones retire into their house. The stage is left clear, and Ino descends from the sky with Lutta, or 'Madness,' at her side. Her mistress Juno, so Ino intimates, regards Hercules with implacable hatred, because he was the offspring of one of the many amours of her husband. Fate had protected him till his last labour had been accomplished; but his work was now finished. He had fulfilled his course; he had completed the task which had been

allotted to him. Her hand was now free. Zeus had delivered Hercules to her revenge, and he was to learn the consequence of having the Queen of the Gods for a foe. Ino had been sent down to Thebes with her horrible companion, and Hercules was to be made the victim of the genius of frenzy. Lutta, the impersonation of the most frightful spirit which distracts humanity, is herself moved with pity at the doom which she is ordered to execute. She remonstrates that Hercules has committed no crime; he has been distinguished always by piety towards the gods, and has been the best of benefactors to man. Lutta pleads in vain. Hercules has gone to the altar to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice for the preservation of his family. The madness seizes him. His eyeballs roll; his mouth foams; he believes that in his own little ones he sees before him the children of his foe Eurystheus; he snatches his bow and destroys them; he kills his children; he kills his wife. The arrow is on the string which is to kill the old Amphitryon, his mother's husband, when Pallas flings him into a swoon, from which he awakes restored to his senses to learn what he has done. He lies down in the dust, his mantle gathered over his head, in speechless agony. There Theseus finds him among the bleeding bodies, and the play ends in unavailing efforts at

consolation under a burden of misery from which no relief is thenceforth possible for ever.

Aristotle declares the object of tragedy to be δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαίνειν τὴν τῶν τοιουτῶν παθημάτων κάθαρσιν. The words are usually taken to point to the sanitary influence of dramatic composition. The poet works upon the passions of 'pity' and 'terror' to produce a moral purification of those and their kindred emotions. Goethe refuses to believe that Aristotle contemplated a purpose in tragedy so remote from the province of art. He understands him to mean that after the audience has been carried through scenes which strain passion and sentiment to the uttermost, the storm abates, the agitated water sinks to rest, and the mind is soothed with moderating reflections which restore it to calm and self-possession.

Either purpose is so little attained in these plays of Euripides that we must look further for his real aim. The one reflection left behind is a horrid consciousness that human life is the plaything of a set of hateful beings, in comparison with whom the worst imaginable mortal is an angel of grace and benignity.

We turn next to the 'Io,' which, if not perfect as a work of art, contains some of the most beautiful passages which are to be found in all the Greek

poetry which survives. Here at last we find gods with some touch of conscience in them. They are still wanton and careless. They cause prolonged misery, and might have caused terrible crimes if accident had not interposed. The reflections upon their characters, which are scattered about the play, are too keenly expressed to be less than the distinct conviction of Euripides' own mind, but the catastrophe restores them to some possibility of respect. When the curtain falls, they are discovered not to have been absolutely heedless of the consequence of their recklessness, and the *κάθαρσις* of which Goethe speaks is in this instance tolerably attained.

Creusa, daughter of Erectheus, and heiress of the Athenian throne, has been violated by Apollo. She produces an infant boy, which she lays secretly in the cave to which Apollo had carried her, in the hope that his divine father will not neglect him. She returns to look for him, and he is gone. Years pass, and she can hear no tidings of him, and she concludes at last that the child must have been devoured by vultures or beasts of prey. In time she marries Xuthus, who in her right succeeds her father on the throne. She has no second offspring, though she and her husband are passionately anxious for an heir. At length they go together to Apollo's temple at

Delphi to consult the oracle, the lady with many curious thoughts, to which her husband, who is ignorant of her previous misfortune, is not admitted.

Apollo meanwhile, though he had not relieved the anxieties of his mistress, had not been as careless as she supposed. Hermes, at Apollo's desire, had carried the boy from the cave to Delphi, and had laid him at the door of the shrine, where he had been brought up by the priestess as a foundling cast on the charity of the god. Here, little guessing whom they are encountering, Creusa and Xuthus find him a beautiful youth, just passing into manhood, under the name of Ion. Xuthus enters the temple to learn his own prospects. Creusa remains under the portico, falls into a talk with Ion, and at last, she scarce knows why, tells him her own story, as of some third person, one of her friends.

It is Ion's first introduction into the tangled skein of life, and he forms not unnatural reflections on the tale which Creusa has related to him. 'How can the gods give laws to man,' he asks, 'when they themselves do not observe those laws? Will ye, oh Phœbus, oh Zeus, oh Posidon, punish men for seducing women, when ye give the rein thus freely to your own licentiousness? How can men be evil when they tread in the steps of the gods? The guilt

is in the gods themselves,' who commit the same crimes which they condemn in others.

While Ion is thus learning his first lesson in scepticism, the oracle has informed Xuthus that no further children will be born to him, but that he has a child already, though he knows it not, and that the first youth that he sees after he leaves the temple will be his own. Xuthus goes out, and at once falls in with Ion. He remembers an early indiscretion which makes the story possible. He embraces his supposed offspring; Ion accepts the parent who is thus preternaturally awarded to him, and they depart together to celebrate the occasion at a banquet.

This is well for Xuthus. For Creusa it is not so well: she learns that Apollo has given her husband all that he desired, while herself, though he was the cause of her misery, he has left to barrenness.

The Chorus suggests that Xuthus owes the Athenian throne to her. He will now neglect her. He will scheme that this new-found son shall be his successor. It is too likely, indeed, that, jealous of her influence in Athens, he will secretly destroy her. Ignorant, like all the world, of her own misadventure, the Chorus advises her to anticipate her husband and make away with him and his brat, before they make away with her. Her passion then bursts out:

Shall I be silent still, or tell my shame?
What now withholds me? Not for me to blame
My husband's fault, when my own thoughts conceal
An equal sin I shuddered to reveal,
The guilty secret of my honour's stain,
My own lost babe so long bewailed in vain.

Must I lose all? Ah, must I now see perish
The one last hope I ceased not still to cherish,
And yet endure? Nay, by yon star-set sphere,
By the pure margin of Tritonis' mere,
By Pallas' self, the world my wrongs shall know,
I will no longer bear this hidden load of woe.

Oh Thou who dost from lifeless things distil
Sweet music, thou who canst the forest fill
With the clear bugle note, and from the string
The breathing soul of melody dost bring;
Latona's son, Thee, Thee I will arraign;
Thee, Thee I charge as cause of all my pain.

I in my maiden innocence was straying,
Among the bright spring meadows idly playing,
Gathering in my lap the saffron crocus flowers;
Thou camest glittering with thy golden hair;
Thou caught'st me by the wrist and held me there.
And then thou led'st me to thy cavern bower.
'Mother,' I shrieked. Ah, far away was she,
And I was left to Destiny and Thee.

The months went by; at length I bore a boy,
Thy child and mine, and with an awful joy
I laid him in the cave on thy own bed,
Where I had lain beside thee. Sure, I said
That thou wast near, that thou wouldst hear him cry,
And save and shield his helpless infancy.

Too fond illusion—not for those high spirits
To heed the woes which child of earth inherits:
His baby limbs became the wild beasts' food,
The eaglet's claws were reddened in his blood;
While through the azure air his shining sire
Was sounding pæans on his golden lyre.

The Chorus are properly compassionate, and deliver themselves of the moral reflection that the mixed offspring of men and gods rarely make a good end—but they persist in their advice to Creusa to take care of herself. She resolves in consequence to give Ion a dose of poison, and very narrowly misses doing it. She is discovered, and Ion as nearly escapes having his mother executed for the crime she had failed to accomplish. The *dignus vindice nodus* had arrived. Only Apollo could now set matters straight. He still hesitates to appear in person, being afraid of the reproaches which Creusa would probably heap upon him.[1]

Athene, however, descends in his place. She explains to Ion and Creusa the mystery of their respective identities. She suggests that to spare Xuthus disappointment, they had better keep their secret to themselves, and she winds up the play with the pious observation that though the gods might seem for a time to act ambiguously, they contrived generally to bring matters to a wholesome issue in the end.

With these words this singular drama concludes. It is not a tragedy, for it closes with general satisfaction. It is not a comedy, for the passions worked

[1] μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μολῇ.

upon are throughout too serious for laughter. It is an exhibition of the cherished objects of Athenian devotion, not in a light so wholly detestable as that in which they appear elsewhere, but as contrasted to the utmost disadvantage with the mortals whom they had injured.

So it is throughout. Even in plays not especially directed against the popular creed, expressions are let fall as if by accident, which show how fast Euripides was travelling in the direction of secular intelligence. Helen says, in the *Hecuba*, that Kupris or Aphrodite had compelled her to elope with Paris. Hecuba answers scornfully, 'A pretty jest! My son was fair to look on. The Kupris that compelled you was your own appetite. Aphrodite is mortals' folly, and so is fitly named from Aphrosune' (intemperance).

Again, in the *Helena* :—

> Disgraceful it is to understand Divinity and
> dogmatic truth,
> And yet be ignorant of justice.
> αἰσχρὸν τὰ μέν σε θεῖα παντ' ἐξειδέναι
> τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μὴ· τὰ δὲ δίκαια μὴ εἰδέναι.

Or again this passage, also from the *Helena*, on 'Divination.' In the *Helena* the Egyptian legend is preferred to the Homeric. The true Helen is supposed to have been snatched away from Sparta, and carried to Memphis, to save her from Paris; while

the Helen that fled with him to Troy was a phantom. Upon this Euripides speculates why none of the soothsayers in either Greece or Troy warned the Argives to spare their trouble. Divination was an art still profoundly respected at Athens, yet Euripides says:—

> Vain is the Seer's art and full of lies,
> No insight e'er was gained by sacrifice;
> Foolish and fond the dream that things concealed
> Can be in flight or note of birds revealed.
> Had Chalchas told the army 'twas betrayed,
> Its chiefs were fighting, dying for a shade,
> Their bones would not be bleaching on the sand,
> And Ilium's towers would still unruined stand.
>
> Will ye pretend the gods forbade him speak?
> Why then with divination do ye seek
> For unpermitted knowledge? Leave the fool
> By Seer's arts his erring steps to rule;
> Burnt offerings never filled the idler's store;
> Knowledge and insight are the best diviners—ask no more.

There remains another feature in the Greek creed, a form of superstition not apparently growing faint, but increasing in distinctness of recognition and gathering increasing hold on the imagination; which possessed for Euripides a terrible interest, and seemed to fascinate him with its horror. It was a superstition marvellous in itself, and more marvellous for the influence which it was destined to exert on the religious history of mankind. On the one hand, it is a manifestation of Satan under the most hideous

of aspects; on the other, it is an expression and symbol of the most profound of spiritual truths.

Throughout human life, from the first relation of parent and child to the organisation of a nation or a church, in the daily intercourse of common life, in our loves and in our friendships, in our toils and in our amusements, in trades and in handicrafts, in sickness and in health, in pleasure and in pain, in war and in peace, at every point where one human soul comes in contact with another, there is to be found everywhere, as the condition of right conduct, the obligation to sacrifice self. Every act of man which can be called good is an act of sacrifice, an act which the doer of it would have left undone had he not preferred some other person's benefit to his own, or the excellence of the work on which he was engaged to his personal pleasure or convenience. In common things the law of sacrifice takes the form of positive duty. A soldier is bound to stand by his colours. Every one of us is bound to speak the truth, whatever the cost. But beyond the limits of positive enactment, the same road, and the same road only, leads up to the higher zones of character. The good servant prefers his employer to himself. The good employer considers the welfare of his servant more than his own profit. The artisan or the labourer,

who has the sense in him of preferring right to wrong, will not be content with the perfunctory execution of the task allotted to him, but will do it as excellently as he can. From the sweeping of a floor to the governing of a country, from the baking of a loaf to the watching by the sick-bed of a friend, there is the same rule everywhere. It attends the man of business in the crowded world; it follows the artist and the poet into his solitary studio. Let the thought of self intrude, let the painter but pause to consider how much reward his work will bring to him, let him but warm himself with the prospects of the fame and the praise which is to come to him, and the cunning will forsake his hand, and the power of his genius will be gone from him. The upward sweep of excellence is proportioned, with strictest accuracy, to oblivion of the self which is ascending.

From the time when men began first to reflect, this peculiar feature of their nature was observed. The law of animal life appears to be merely self-preservation; the law of man's life is self-annihilation; and only at times when men have allowed themselves to doubt whether they are really more than developed animals has self-interest ever been put forward as a guiding principle. Honesty may be the best policy, said Coleridge, but no honest man will act on that

hypothesis. Sacrifice is the first element of religion, and resolves itself in theological language into the love of God.

Only those, however, who are themselves noble-minded can consciously apprehend a noble emotion. Truths are perceived and acknowledged, perhaps for a time are appropriately acted on. They pass on into common hands; like gold before it can be made available for a currency, they become alloyed with baser metal. The most beautiful feature in humanity, the distinct recognition of which was the greatest step ever taken in the course of true progress, became, when made over to priests and theologians, the most hideous and most accursed of caricatures.

By the side of the law of sacrifice it was observed also from obvious experience that the fortunes of man were compassed with uncertainties over which he had no control. The owner of enormous wealth was brought to the dunghill, the prince to a dungeon. The best and the worst were alike the prey of accidents. Those who had risen highest in earthly distinction were those who seemed specially marked for the buffets of destiny. Those who could have endured with equanimity the loss of riches and power, could be reached through loss of honour, through the sufferings of family and friends, through the misgivings of

their own hearts on the real nature of the spiritual powers by which the earth and universe are governed.

The arbitrary caprice displayed in these visitations of calamity naturally perplexed even the wisest. Conscious that they were in the hands of forces which it was impossible to resist, of beings whose wrath the most perfect virtue failed to avert, men inferred that the benevolence of the gods was crossed by a sportive malignity. They saw that all that was most excellent in human society was bought by the sacrifice of the few good to the many worthless. The self-devotion of those who were willing to forget themselves was exacted as the purchase-money of the welfare of the rest. The conclusion was that the gods envied mankind too complete enjoyment. They demanded of them from time to time the most precious thing which they possessed, and the most precious possession of any family or nation was the purest and most innocent member of it.

It was among the Semitic nations that the propitiatory immolation of a human being first became an institution. Homer knew nothing of it. The Trojan youths who were slaughtered at the pyre of Patroclus were the victims merely of the wrath of Achilles, and the massacre of them was the savage accompaniment of the funeral rites of his dead friend. By the Semitic

nations of Palestine, the eldest born of man and beast was supposed to belong to the gods, and at any moment might be claimed by them. The intended sacrifice of Isaac is an evident allusion to the customs from which the son of Abraham was miraculously redeemed. The deaths of the first-born in every house in Egypt on the night of the Passover, the story of Jephthah, the brief but expressive mention of the king of Moab, who, in distress, impaled his son on the wall of his city, the near escape of Jonathan, whom the lot had detected, as marked by the curse of his father, the Phœnician legend of the exposure of Andromeda to the sea monster, point all in the same direction. The Carthaginians, a colony from Tyre, at the crisis of their struggle with Rome, devoted to the anger of the gods four hundred of the sons of their principal nobles.

At some time in the interval between Homer and the Persian wars, this singular superstition was carried into Greece, and was at once incorporated in the received mythology. The great national story of the Trojan war was probably the first which it interpenetrated; and there sprung up in the midst of it the as yet unknown incident which has impressed so powerfully the imagination of mankind, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis.

The name Iphigenia is probably Jephthagenia, a Grecised version of 'Jephthah's daughter,' and reveals the origin of the story. The 'idea' once accepted passed into other heroic traditions. Human sacrifice, symbolic or actual, was adopted into the religious ceremonials of Athens. It was a growing belief which spread through successive generations, and prepared the way in the end for the reception of the doctrine of the Christian Atonement. But before the key to the mystery was revealed, the frightful conception inspired the purest minds in Greece with a repugnance proportional to the fascination which it exercised on the multitude.

No less than six of the most important plays of Euripides revolve on this Semitic innovation on the creed of Homer; the two *Iphigenias, in Aulis* and *in Tauris*, the *Hecuba*, the *Alcestis*, the *Heraclidæ*, and the *Phœnissæ*.

The *Hecuba*, perhaps, marks a transition stage in which the Semitic notion of sacrifice to the gods is imperfectly blended with the earlier Greek necromancy. The scene of the play is the Thracian Chersonese, where the Grecian fleet is detained by foul winds after the fall of Troy, as it was detained before at Aulis. The shade of Achilles appears, and intimates that the army will not be allowed to return till

some young maiden is made over to him. The Ulysses of Homer, when he visits the realms of the dead, slaughters a heifer and a ram. The blood is collected in a trench, where the ghosts present themselves and drink, and in drinking obtain strength to speak. Achilles similarly requires blood to drink; but the stream which flows from the veins of an animal will not satisfy his thirst: he demands the blood of a human being.[1]

A victim is found in Polyxena, the last surviving daughter of Priam's queen who remains to her mother, after Cassandra had been appropriated by Agamemnon. The poetic ingenuity of Euripides is employed in its highest form to exhibit the piteousness of the selection, to excuse, so far as excuse is possible, the human instruments of so dark a deed, and to hold up to indignant hatred the fiends who compel it to be done. He shows us Hecuba, late the honoured wife of the imperial Priam, on the pinnacle of earthly splendour, now husbandless, a wretched slave, with the terror, fresh upon her soul, of the sacked city and

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[1] Neoptolemus says at the altar:

ὦ παῖ Πηλέως πάτηρ δ' ἐμός,
Δέξαι χοάς μοι τὰς δὲ κηληθρίους
νεκρῶν ἀγωγοὺς. ἔλθε γ' ὡς πιῇς μέλαν
κορῆς ἀκραιφνὲς αἷμα· ὅ σοι δωρούμεθα
στρατός τε κἄγω.

'of garments rolled in blood.' Her youngest son Polydorus, who had been sent to Thrace for security, she believed to be still left to her; but Polydorus had been murdered by his guardian, and she must now see her innocent Polyxena offered up to the ferocity of a vampyre.

Polyxena, when she hears her fate, thinks only of her mother's desolation. The mother thinks only of her child, and hopes that Achilles will be satisfied with her own wretched life in exchange. The hard-eyed warriors themselves are melted with the pity of the scene. The cause is pleaded before the council; Agamemnon, remembering his own agonies, feebly interposes. But Ulysses, in whom Euripides embodies the object of his bitterest detestation, an Athenian demagogue, replies that good service to the commonwealth must not be left unrewarded; Achilles must not have to complain of the ingratitude of his comrades, and Achilles requires a daintier morsel than a broken-down old woman.

It is decided that Achilles must have his will; yet while the chiefs insist upon the death and witness it in person, all other feelings are lost in admiration of the bravery of the Trojan maiden. She refuses to be bound, she bares her throat with her own hand and presents it to the knife. She

arranges her modest dress that when she falls she shall fall decently.

κρυπτουσ' ἃ κρύπτειν ὄμματ' ἀρσένων χρέων

She dies amidst cries of applauding pity, and the spectators bound forward to pay the last honours

τῇ πέρισσ' εὐκαρδιῳ
ψυχήν τ' ἀρίστῃ.

And what follows? We are to look now for the καθαρσις, the soothing sense of final satisfaction or the moral elevation or purification; and what is it? The mother becomes a furious maniac. Talthybius, the herald who brings the news of her daughter's death to her, doubts whether the existence of God be not a dream of fools, and whether man is not the sport of blind fate or chance.

> Oh God! what shall I say? That thou regard'st
> our deeds,
> Or that the faith that there are gods at all
> Is better than a visionary dream,
> And Chance alone is lord of human things?

The play is complicated by a double tragedy. Polyxena is sacrificed. Polydorus is murdered by his host to enhance the misery of the mother, and the attention is divided between the treachery of Polymnestor, and the necessity imposed upon the unwilling Grecian leaders by the religious senti-

ments of the age. Not the least noticeable feature is the degradation of the heroes of the earlier tradition by the debasement of the popular creed. Achilles has become an Asiatic Ghoul. Ulysses has degenerated into the eloquent orator, the dexterous master of the arts of democratic persuasion, whose natural manliness is lost in the commonplace sentiments of the received beliefs of his contemporaries.

We come now to two Iphigenias, in Aulis and Tauris. The Vampyre of the *Hecuba* becomes here a goddess. In both these plays the sacrifice of an innocent victim is the sole motive of the action. In both the natural virtues of humanity are exhibited as endeavouring to avert the catastrophe. In both the virgin Artemis, the object of the pure devotion of Hippolytus, appears under the revolting aspect of an Indian idol.

As in the *Hecuba*, an unseen cause prevents the fleet from sailing out of Aulis. The Fates have decreed that Troy must fall, but none the less the conditions must be fulfilled. Artemis requires, through the lips of the prophet Calchas, that the most beautiful damsel in Greece must die. Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter, possesses the unhappy pre-eminence, and the unanimous voice of the camp

demands that she must suffer. Achilles, for whose bride she had been destined, would have saved her, but he declares sadly that his own myrmidons would be the first to turn upon him. Iphigenia is carried to the altar. Like Polyxena she stands there alone, her father weeping at her side, and the purpose is carried out till the knife is buried in her throat. Then only the popular feeling, not so utterly corrupted by sacerdotalism as to acquiesce without a pang, allows the dramatist to throw a cloud over the closing scene. Iphigenia disappears. A bleeding kid is seen upon the ground in her place: the grim goddess had snatched her, like another Isaac, from destruction. The intention is accepted for the act. But Iphigenia is reserved only for a fate to which death would have been preferable. She is carried by Artemis to the gloomy Tauric Chersonese, where the rites which in Greece were yet but occasional, were the established custom of the Scythian savages. She becomes priestess at a shrine where every stranger is slaughtered who lands on that inhospitable shore. On Iphigenia falls the duty of preparing them for execution, and she discharges her horrid task without remorse or objection, till fate brings thither her brother Orestes and his friend. The frequency of the religious murders in which she has borne her part is indicated

in a line which recalls the description of the block in the King's Palace at Coomassie. The altar stone is daubed thick with russet stains from the blood which has been shed upon it. Iphigenia, ignorant that Orestes is her brother, commences the preliminary rites with cold and scarcely felt compassion, and only when she discovers the truth her obligations as a priestess yield before the emotions of relationship. She consents to fly with Orestes and his companion, carrying with her the image of the precious goddess to whose service she is still devoted. They are pursued, and would have been taken, when Athene takes command of the situation. Thoas, the king, is warned to let them go. Orestes is to return to Greece with his sister, and be purified at Athens for his mother's murder, while an altar is to be raised in Attica for Artemis; and that she shall not be robbed of her customary honours a festival is to be instituted, at which a priest shall annually shed the blood of some human victim.[1]

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[1] *νόμον τε θές τόνδ' · ὅταν ἑορτάζῃ λεώς*
τῆς σῆς σφαγῆς ἄποιν' ἐπισχέτω ξίφος·
δέρῃ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς αἷμά τ' ἐξανιέτω
δσίας ἕκατι, θέα θ' ὅπως τιμὰς ἔχῃ.
Iphigenia in Tauris, II. 1458–1461.

The words imply that the throat was to be pierced till the blood ran. Without shedding of blood there was no remission, but it need not have been absolutely the life's blood.

It might be doubted so far whether Euripides obliged us to believe that human sacrifices were actually offered to the gods in Greece itself.' Polyxena was an offering to the shade of a mortal; Iphigenia had been rescued at the moment of death; but three plays remain which leave no room for uncertainty; the *Alcestis*, the *Phœnissæ*, and the *Heraclidæ*. In the *Alcestis* the wife is sacrificed for her husband, in the *Phœnissæ* a Theban youth for his country, in the *Heraclidæ* a sister for her brothers. In each case there is no natural connection between the suffering of the victim and the advantages received from it. The occasion is merely the arbitrary pleasure of an omnipotent something that chose to make the death of an innocent human being the condition of his favour.

The *Alcestis* has lately been made familiar to English readers in the version of Mr. Browning. Excellent as Mr. Browning's workmanship invariably is, he will himself acknowledge that no English rendering can produce the effect of the original. English words carry with them English associations, and no modern language can generate the intellectual atmosphere in which the characters of a drama constructed on so extravagant an hypothesis can appear like breathing men and women. It is only in the

speech of a people among whom this and its kindred superstitions entered into the ordinary belief, that the imagination can be brought into sympathy with the actors, or the motive can have sufficient verisimilitude for the purposes of dramatic illusion. A translation so recent, however, and so well known, makes it unnecessary to dwell in detail upon this play; and the more so, as even here also to some extent Euripides condescends to human weakness, and after Death has carried off his prey permits Hercules to tear it from him.

The *Phœnissæ* takes its name from the Phœnician women of whom the Chorus is composed; but the plot, the scene, and the actors are purely Greek; and Phœnicians were doubtless introduced into it, and the name was selected for the play, to indicate the source of the superstition against which it is so evidently directed. The subject is the legend of the House of Œdipus, the familiar and favourite ground of the Greek tragedian. The period of the story is the same which Æschylus selects for the *Seven against Thebes*, and Sophocles for the *Antigone*. Euripides, however, treats the subject in his own manner, and introduces incidents peculiar to himself.

He traces the original cause of the curse which

had fallen on the Labdacidæ. Laius, the father of Œdipus, had fallen into the peculiar vice which dishonoured Greek civilisation. Euripides hints that he was but imitating an example already set by Zeus; but a curse overtakes him notwithstanding. If he has a son he is to die by that son's hand. The son who kills him is to commit incest with his own mother, and to beget sons in turn who are destined to destroy one another. Two of the three catastrophes have been accomplished when the *Phœnissæ* opens. Œdipus, ignorant of his parentage, has killed his father and has married his mother Jocasta. On discovering what he has done he has torn out his eyes in despair. Eteocles and Polynices, the offspring of this incestuous connection, to escape the doom which threatens them, have agreed to reign in Thebes in alternate years, and never to be there simultaneously. Eteocles, as the elder, takes the first turn, and when his year is out refuses to resign. Polynices has married an Argive princess, and brings an Argive army with six Peloponnesian chiefs to compel his brother to fulfil his compact. Thus, in spite of precautions, the doom is made complete. The brothers meet in single combat and die as had been foretold. So far Euripides runs along the established lines; but within the larger circle he in-

troduces his peculiar underplot. The fate of Eteocles and Polynices has been determined irreversibly by destiny. The fate of Thebes itself is still uncertain. Whether Thebes is to fall before the invaders, or whether the race sprung from the dragon's teeth are to keep inviolate the sacred city, hangs still unsettled in the balance of the gods. Thebes may be saved, but the gods require blood. A beautiful youth of the dragon's race must be sacrificed. One poor lad alone meets the required conditions—Menœceus, Jocasta's nephew, son of the aged Creon. As Hecuba would have died for Polyxena, and Pylades for Orestes, so Creon prays the gods to take him in the place of the boy whose life is all before him. The gods adhere to the sweeter victim. Creon in his misery prefers that Thebes should perish, and implores Menœceus to fly. Menœceus declares that while his companions are risking their lives in the battle before the gates it shall not be said of him that he is careful of his own. He ascends the wall and drives the knife into his heart. The hosts of the Argives melt away and Thebes is saved.

Heroic, it may be said—a noble example to the youth of Athens, whose country was now threatened by the Spartans. In part, perhaps, this was the poet's meaning, but the name of the play points to

an ulterior object. His real purpose appears, where no mistake is possible, in the *Heraclidæ*.

After the death of Hercules, the persecution which he had endured from Eurystheus was extended to his surviving children, the Heraclidæ. They had fled from Argos with their grandmother Alcmena and their aged guardian Iolaus. Wherever they had taken refuge they had been followed by the messengers of Eurystheus to demand their surrender or expulsion. They had thus wandered from court to court till they arrived at Athens, where they appealed to the generosity of Theseus. There, too, the Argive messenger appeared. Theseus replied to the imperious menace of his master, that Eurystheus might do his worst. Eurystheus, in consequence, invaded Attica, and the Athenian people resolved gallantly to protect their guests.

Brave men fighting on the side of justice might expect the gods to be on their side. The gods are willing, but the condition is insisted on as indispensable that a maiden must be sacrificed, and Theseus, who is willing to meet Eurystheus in battle, yet cannot ask an Athenian citizen to surrender his daughter to a fate so horrible. If the Heraclidæ were given up they were to die, and Alcmena, who had borne Hercules to Zeus, was to suffer along with them.

Under such circumstances Zeus might have been expected to interpose to save his mistress and his grandchildren. Alcmena exclaims not unnaturally:

> I may not reproach him,
> But he does know if he deals justly by me.

But Zeus was at a banquet with the Æthiopians, or he was asleep, or toying with some new mistress. From Zeus there was no hope. If there was hope anywhere, it was from some generous human soul. Macaria, one of the Heraclidæ, and seemingly the only sister among them, is the most beautiful figure which Euripides has drawn. Her name, 'the blessed one,' indicates the delight with which he regarded his own invention. Macaria considers that if Theseus and his countrymen are ready to risk their lives in defence of her brothers, and if the gods make a maiden's blood the price of their support, she is herself the most appropriate victim. Iolaus in despair would rather die himself a hundred times; but a hundred Iolauses would not be accepted: the gods must have a lamb without spot, and Macaria chooses her lot, and sweetly and calmly resigns herself to it. She indulges in no illusions. Life is beautiful to her and death is terrible, and death may not be all. Theology had made the gods so hideous that the thought of a possible future brought no relief or con-

solation with it. The hope was rather that death at least was a limit to the dominion of beings so wanton in their cruelty. If another life lay before her, Macaria trusted that her voluntary self-immolation might pass to her credit. But no poet ever wrote lines more true to the real thoughts of sad and serious humanity than the passionate desire that the grave may be the end of everything, which he places in the lips of his dying heroine.

> εἴη δὲ μέντοι μηδέν· εἰ γὰρ ἔξομεν
> κἀκεῖ μεριμνὰς οἱ θανουμένοι βροτῶν,
> οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποι τις τρέψεται· τὸ γὰρ θανεῖν
> κακῶν μέγιστον φάρμακον νομίζεται.
>
> Oh, that there may be nothing! If again
> Beyond the sleep of death we wake to pain,
> What hope will then remain to us? To die
> Is of all ills the surest remedy.

Saddest aspiration to which in the darkest hour a suffering mortal can be driven! Against so gloomy a back-ground the sacrifice shines with more brilliant intensity—yet what better could Macaria ask or wish? If we are to regard a life beyond the grave with hopeful expectation, we must believe that some just, wise, and good Being in the last resort presides over the universe. When, instead of a wise, good Being, mankind have created for themselves a power whose attributes, so far as they are recognisable on

earth, resemble those of some malignant fiend, a Macaria can but exclaim, 'May there be nothing!' A Hamlet will say:

> To die,—to sleep,—
> No more; and by a sleep to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural ills
> That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wished.

Iolaus shrieks against the sentence which Macaria has pronounced against herself. The Chorus, sadly knowing with how small a hope of recompence hereafter she was departing, rebukes his profitless impatience, knowing that, recompence or no recompence, the road of self-devotion is still the best to follow.

> The tides of life uneven flow,
> And ever betwixt weal and woe
> We drift and waver to and fro,
> Because the gods will have it so.
>
> I see the great ones prostrate lie,
> I see the beggar lifted high,
> And none his destined fate can fly,
> And all in vain we strive or cry.
>
> Fret not, old man, nor feebly rave,
> For one thou canst not, must not save;
> The maid, self-doomed and nobly brave,
> For land and kindred meets the grave.
>
> True daughter of a princely line,
> Eternal glory shall be thine,
> From age to age, with light divine,
> The glow of this thy deed around thy name shall shine.

All generations shall call thee 'Macaria' or 'Blessed.' Not thee, but one not wholly unlike.

Not one who was herself the victim, but one through whose heart the sword pierced as she sat under the Cross where these impassioned conceptions found at last their explanation and consummation.

The Epicurean philosophers, as religion waned, threw themselves into the study of natural phenomena. They believed that as man became acquainted with the physical laws of the universe, superstition would disappear, and a code of practical rules could be created on theories of expediency. Science might plume itself on its splendid discoveries; but human nature was stronger than science, and in spite of it, and by the side of it, witchcraft, magic, necromancy, with their attendant abominations, developed out of the putrescent corpse of Paganism. Lucretius would not have selected the sacrifice of Iphigenia as an illustration of the atrocities which could be provoked by religion, unless the spirit which had presided at Aulis had been still alive and active. Those who would draw the horoscope of the spiritual future of mankind from the progress of knowledge, will find their forecasts defeated by forces which they disdain to recognise. Far as they may extend the confines of discovery, the shoreless infinite of the unknown will still extend beyond them, and the hopes and fears of what

may lie in that impenetrable region must ever have an influence stronger than reason on the spiritual convictions of humanity. Lucretius boasted that he had trampled religion under his feet, and that natural philosophy would sit henceforth triumphant on the throne from which God had been deposed. The especial aspect of religion which had been chosen to illustrate its hatefulness was on the eve of becoming the soul of a creed which was to remodel human society, and open a new era. The doctrine of human sacrifice, which had exerted so strange and growing a fascination, was to lose its horrors while retaining its ennobling influence. The emotions and the conscience were reconciled when God Himself became His own victim.

SOCIETY IN ITALY IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC.

WHETHER free institutions create good citizens, or whether conversely free institutions imply good citizens and wither up and perish as private virtue decays, is a question which will continue to be agitated as long as political society continues. The science of history ought to answer it, but the science of history is silent or ambiguous where, if it could tell us anything at all, it would be able to speak decidedly. What is called the philosophy of history is, and can be, only an attempted interpretation of earlier ages by the modes of thought current in our own; and those modes of thought, being formed by the study of the phenomena which are actually round us, are changed from era to era. We read the past by the light of the present, and the forms vary as the shadows fall, or as the point of vision alters. Those who have studied most conscientiously the

influences which have determined their own convictions will be the last to claim exemption from the control of forces which they recognise as universal and irresistible. The foreground of human life is the only part of it which we can examine with real exactness. As the distance recedes details disappear in the shade, or resolve themselves into outlines. We turn to contemporary books and records, but we lose in light and in connection with present experience what we gain in minuteness. The accounts of their own times which earlier writers leave to us are coloured in turn by their opinions, and we cannot so reproduce the past as to guard against prejudices which governed those writers as much as they govern ourselves. The result, even to the keenest historical sight, is no more than a picture which each of us paints for himself upon the retina of his own imagination.

These conditions of our nature warn us all, if we are wise, against generalised views of history. We form general views. This, too, we cannot help, unless we are ignorant of the past altogether. But we receive them for what they are worth. They do not repose upon a knowledge of facts which can form the foundations of a science. We see certain objects; but we see them not as they were, but fore-shortened

by distance and coloured by the atmosphere of time. The impression, before it arrives in our minds, has been half created by ourselves. Therefore it is that from philosophy of history, from attempts to explain the phenomena of earlier generations by referring them to general principles, we turn with weariness and distrust. We find more interest in taking advantage of those rare occasions where we can apply a telescope to particular incidents, and catch a sight of small fractions of the actual doings of our fellow-mortals, where accident enables us to examine them in detailed pattern. We may obtain little in this way to convince our judgment, but we can satisfy an innocent curiosity, and we can sometimes see enough to put us on our guard against universal conclusions.

We know, for instance (so far as we can speak of knowledge of the general character of an epoch), that the early commonwealth of Rome was distinguished by remarkable purity of manners; that the marriage tie was singularly respected; that the Latin yeomen, who were the back-bone of the community, were industrious and laborious, that they lived with frugality and simplicity, and brought up their children in a humble fear of God or of the gods as rulers to whom they would one day have to give an account. That the youth of a plant which grew so sturdily was ex-

ceptionally healthy is no more than we should naturally infer, and that the fact was so is confirmed to us both by legend and authentic record. The change of manners is assumed by some persons to have come in with the Cæsars. Virtue is supposed to have flourished so long as liberty survived, and the perfidy and profligacy of which we read with disgust in Tacitus and Juvenal are regarded as the offspring of despotism. With the general state of European morals under the first centuries of the Empire we are extremely ill-acquainted. Tacitus and Juvenal describe the society of the capital. Of life in the country and in the provincial towns they tell us next to nothing. If we may presume that the Messalinas had their imitators in the provinces; if we may gather from the Epistles of St. Paul that the morals of Corinth for instance were not distinguished by any special excellence, yet there was virtue or desire of virtue enough in the world to make possible the growth of Christianity.

Accident, on the other hand, has preserved the fragments of a drama of real life, which was played out in the last days of the Republic, partly in Rome itself, partly in a provincial city in South Italy, from which it would appear that the ancient manners were already everywhere on the decline; that institutions

suited to an age when men were a law to themselves, could not prevent them from becoming wicked if they were inclined, and only saved them from punishment when they had deserved it. The broken pieces of the story leave much to be desired. The actions are preserved; the actors are little more than names. The flesh and blood, the thoughts that wrought in the brain, the passions that boiled in the veins—these are dry as the dust of a mummy from an Egyptian catacomb. Though generations pass away, however, the earth at least remains. We cannot see the old nations, but we can stand where they stood; we can look on the landscape on which they looked; we can watch the shadows of the clouds chasing one another on the same mountain slopes; we can listen to the everlasting music of the same water-falls; we can hear the same surf far off breaking upon the beach.

Let us transport ourselves then to the Neapolitan town of Larino, not far from the Gulf of Venice. In the remains of the amphitheatre we can recognise the Roman hands that once were labouring there.

Let us imagine that it is the year 88 before Christ, when Cæsar was a boy of twelve, when the Social War had just been ended by Sylla, and Marius had

fled from Rome, to moralise amidst the ruins of Carthage. Larino, like most of the Samnite towns, had taken part with the patriots. Several of its most distinguished citizens had fallen in battle. They had been defeated, but their cause had survived. Summoned to Asia to oppose Mithridates, Sylla had postponed his revenge, and had conceded at least some of the objects for which the Italians had been in arms. The leaders returned to their homes, and their estates escaped confiscation. The two families of highest consequence in Larino were the Cluentii and the Aurii. Both were in mourning. Lucius Cluentius, who had commanded the insurgent army in Campania, had been killed at Nola. Marcus Aurius had not returned to Larino at the peace, and was supposed to have fallen in the North of Italy. Common political sympathies had drawn the survivors together, and they were further connected by marriage. There remained of the Cluentii a widowed mother named Sassia, with two children, Aulus Cluentius Avitus, a boy of sixteen, and his sister Cluentia, a year younger. Dinea, the mother of the Aurii, was a widow also. Dinea had been the sister of Sassia's husband, and was therefore herself a Cluentia. She had four children, all some years older than their cousins—Marcus Aurius, whom she believed to be dead;

Numerius Aurius; Cnæus Magius Aurius; and a daughter, Magia.

The Aurii had other relations of the same name at Larino — Aurius Melinus, Caius Melinus, and several more. The Cluentii were the last of their race. Both families were rich. The wealth which had poured into Rome after the conquest of the East had filtered over Italy. These provincial magistrates lived in handsome villas, with comforts which would have made Cato shudder, and waited upon by retinues of slaves. Otherwise scandal had no harm to say of either Aurii or Cluentii. They were honoured for their patriotism, and beloved for their private virtues.

A third family at Larino, the Oppianici, though also connected with the Aurii, belonged to the opposite faction. Caius Oppianicus, the younger of two brothers, was married to Dinea's daughter Magia. Statius Albinus Oppianicus, the elder, and the head of the clan, had been three times married: first to a sister of Dinea, who had died, leaving him with a son; next, to a lady named Papia, who bore him a son also, and whom he had divorced; lastly, to Novia, who was for the present living with him and had brought him a third son, an infant. He had squandered his own fortune and the fortune of his

first wife, whom he was suspected of having poisoned. He had since been living by his wits, and had figured unpleasantly in a late trial at Rome. A foolish youth of Larino, appropriately named Asinius, had come into possession of a large sum of money. Like Iago, who made his fool his purse, Oppianicus took possession of Asinius, carried him to Rome to see the world, and launched him among the taverns and the gambling houses. A confederate, Avilius, a Larinate also, made a third in the party; and one night, when Asinius was absent with a female companion, with whom they were assured that he would remain till morning, Avilius affected to be taken suddenly ill, and said that he must make his will. A notary and witnesses were introduced to whom the persons of Avilius and Asinius were alike unknown. Avilius bequeathed all his property to Oppianicus, signed his name Asinius, and then recovered. The true Asinius was waylaid and killed a few days after. Oppianicus produced the will, claimed the estate, and obtained it—not, however, without some notice having been drawn to the matter which might have ended unpleasantly for him. Suspicions had been aroused, it does not appear how. Avilius was arrested and carried before one of the city magistrates, to whom in his terror he confessed the truth. For-

tunately for Oppianicus, the magistrate was discreet and not inaccessible. The spoils were divided and the affair was hushed up, but it had naturally been much talked of at Larino. Oppianicus had been looked on askance; in the matter of fortune he was in a desperate condition, and he was on the look-out for the nearest means of improving his circumstances.

He was a man, it appears, of considerable personal attractions. He had made himself agreeable to his brother's wife Magia, and had seduced her. Her brother Numerius caught a fever and suddenly died, leaving his share of the Aurian property to his brother Cnæus Magius.

Cnæus Magius fell ill also very soon after. He, perhaps, suspected the cause of his sickness. At any rate he had seen with alarm and suspicion his sister's intimacy with a person of so questionable a character as Albinus Oppianicus. His alarms were not diminished when her husband, Caius Oppianicus, was found dead in his bed, from some unexplained visitation; and growing rapidly worse, and feeling that his own end was not far off, he sent for his sister, and in the presence of his mother Dinea he questioned her as to whether she was pregnant. She assured him that it was so. She half satisfied

him that she was herself innocent of guilt, and that Caius Oppianicus, and not his brother, was the father. He made a will bequeathing the whole inheritance which had fallen to him to this child as soon as it should be born. He appointed his mother, Dinea, the guardian, lest Albinus Oppianicus should interfere. If the child should miscarry, or should not survive, Dinea and Magia were then to divide the estates between them.

The arrangement had scarcely been completed when Cnæus Magius died. Oppianicus then induced Magia to take a medicine which produced abortion. Magia and Dinea became thus coheiresses, and Oppianicus saw almost within his reach the accumulated wealth of the family.

At this moment a stranger appeared in Larino who brought news that the elder brother, Marcus Aurius, was still alive. He had not been killed, as report had said, but had been taken prisoner, and was confined with hard labour at a convict station in the North of Italy. The story was not improbable, and the new-comer produced credible evidence of the truth of what he said. He gave Dinea the names and addresses of persons who had seen Marcus Aurius, and could find him. The hope that she had still a son surviving came to comfort her in her

desolation, and she despatched friends to discover him, purchase his release, and restore him to her.

So unpleasant a discovery came inopportunely for the schemes of Oppianicus; but he lost neither heart nor presence of mind. He made acquaintance with the stranger, purchased his help, and induced him to vary his account, and throw Dinea on a false scent. He sent off a confederate to gain the parties in the North and mislead the mother's messengers, while a certain Sextus Vibrius was despatched to obtain true directions from them, to find out Marcus Aurius, and assassinate him. The game was dangerous, however, so long as Dinea lived. She had Aurian kinsmen in Larino who were powerful, and to whom she might possibly appeal. He was aware that her suspicions would turn upon himself as soon as she should hear that her son could not be found, and he thought it better to anticipate future trouble by removing her at once. She was growing old, and her health had been shaken by sorrow and anxiety. Oppianicus recommended to her the assistance of a physician of whose skill he professed to have had experience. Dinea declined his advice, and sent for another doctor from Ancona, whom Oppianicus had some difficulty in gaining over to his purpose. He succeeded at last, however, with a bribe of four thousand pounds, and the

unfortunate woman was poisoned. Before she died she, too, made a will; but Oppianicus destroyed it. His agents in the North sent him word that his work had been successfully done. Marcus Aurius had been found and killed, and all traces were destroyed by which his fate could be discovered. Oppianicus at once divorced his present wife, married Magia, and took possession of the estates in her name.

He had played his cards skilfully; but again, as with his adventure at Rome, without having succeeded perfectly in averting suspicion from himself. Many eyes, no doubt, were watching him. The Larinates could not see with complaisance the entire disappearance of one of their most honoured families, and the Aurian estates passing into the hands of a blemished and bankrupt adherent of the Oligarchic faction. The messengers sent by Dinea reported that they could not discover Marcus Aurius; but they had found that secret efforts had been made to baffle them. They had ascertained that Oppianicus had been concerned in those efforts, and they wrote to Larino, charging him with foul play. Dinea being dead, the letters were taken to the nearest relative of the family, Aurius Melinus.

This Aurius Melinus had already appeared before the Larinate public in a not very creditable manner.

Soon after the death of her father he had married Cluentia, daughter of the widow Sassia, and sister of Aulus Cluentius Avitus. Sassia, who was a licentious, unprincipled woman, became enamoured of her son-in-law. Under the ancient Roman law, the marriage tie had been as indissoluble as in the strictest Christian community. But the restraint of marriage, like every other check on the individual will, had gone down before the progress of democracy. To divorce a wife was now as easy as to change a dress. The closest affinity was no longer an obstacle to a new connection. Sassia succeeded in enchanting her son-in-law. The daughter was divorced, and the mother was installed in her place.

Public opinion, though degenerate, was not entirely corrupted. The world of Larino considered itself outraged by what it still regarded as incest. Aulus Cluentius, the son, took his mother's conduct so much to heart that he refused to see either her or her husband, and the domestic scandal had created almost as much agitation as the tragedy of Dinea and her children. The two vicious streams were now to unite. Aurius Melinus, perhaps to recover the esteem of his fellow-citizens, put himself forward to demand justice against the murderers of his kinsmen. He called a public meeting; he read aloud in the assembly the

letters from the North denouncing Oppianicus. He demanded an immediate investigation. If his cousin Marcus was no longer alive, he charged Oppianicus with having assassinated him.

Suspicions already rife turned to certainty. The people rose. They rushed to Oppianicus's house to seize and tear him in pieces. Exceptional villains appear at times to be the special care of Providence, as if they had a work given them to do and might not perish till it was accomplished. Oppianicus had fled; and unhappily a political revolution had not only provided him with a sure refuge, but with means yet more fatal of adding to his crimes. While Sylla was fighting Mithridates in Asia, Marius had returned to a seventh Consulship, and the democracy had enjoyed a brief and sanguinary triumph; but Marius was dead, and Sylla had returned a conqueror, and the name of every eminent advocate of popular rights was now entered on a proscription list. · Sylla's lieutenant, Quintus Metellus, was encamped not far from Larino. Oppianicus threw himself on Metellus's protection, representing himself, perhaps, as the victim of a popular commotion. Metellus sent him on to the Dictator, and from Sylla he received a commission to purge Larino of its suspected citizens, to remove the magistrates, and to execute every one who

had been connected with the Marian faction. In the haste of the time he was allowed to draw the list of the proscribed himself, and to enter upon it both his open enemies and the accomplices of his crimes, whose too intimate acquaintance with him he had reason to fear. Aurius Melinus perished, and every remaining member of the Aurian kindred. Sextus Vibrius perished, who had been his instrument in hiding the traces of Marcus Aurius and murdering him. The proscribed were seized and killed without being allowed to speak; and thus at one blow Oppianicus was able to rid himself of every one whose vengeance he had to fear, and of the only witness by whom the worst of his crimes could be brought home to him.

For his services to Sylla he was probably rewarded further out of the estates of his victims, and by a series of enormous crimes, which even in that bad time it is to be hoped could not be easily paralleled, he had become the most opulent and most powerful citizen of his native town.

Oppianicus had obtained all that he had desired, but he found, as all mortals find, that the enjoyment had been in the pursuit—that the prize when won still failed to give perfect satisfaction. Happiness was still flying before him—almost within his grasp,

but still eluding it. Perhaps the murder of her husband, her mother, and her brothers, may have sate uneasily upon Magia. At any rate he had grown weary of Magia. She too was now cleared away to make room for a more suitable companion. On the death of Aurius Melinus, Sassia was again a widow, and Oppianicus became a suitor for her hand. It was true that he had killed her husband, but he swore, like Richard, that he had done it 'to help her to a better husband.' It was Sassia's 'heavenly face' which had set him on, and Sassia listened, not unfavourably. There were difficulties, however, which had first to be removed. Sassia was rich, and in a position to make conditions. Oppianicus had three children, whose mothers she may have disliked, or whom she expected that she would find in her way. She was willing to tolerate the eldest, who bore his father's name, but she refused to marry him till the two little ones had been removed.

The horrible woman was showing herself a suitable mate for Oppianicus. Her wealth, her person, perhaps this last proof of the hardiness of her disposition, determined him to secure her on her own terms. One of his little boys was being brought up with his mother at Theano. He sent for the child to Larino. In the night it was taken ill and died, and

to prevent inquiry into the manner of its death, the body was burnt before dawn the next morning. Two days after the other little boy died with as mysterious suddenness; and Sassia became Oppianicus's wife.

The people of Larino shuddered and muttered. They could not challenge the favourite of Sylla, the chief magistrate of the town, who had the local authority in his hands and the confidence of the Dictator at Rome; but they shrank from contact with him. They avoided both him and his wife as if they had the plague. Young Cluentius especially held aloof from his mother more sternly than ever, and would neither speak to her nor see her.

At length Sylla died; the middle classes through Italy drew their breath freely again, and at Larino as elsewhere the people could venture to make their voices heard. There was in the town an ancient and venerable college of Priests of Mars, a sort of Cathedral Chapter. The priests had obtained the Roman franchise as a result of the Italian war. It had been confirmed to them by Marius. It had been taken away again by Sylla. And now that Sylla was gone, a deputation from the town was sent to the Senate to petition for its restoration. With this deputation, as one of its members, went young Aulus Cluentius,

who was then acquiring fame as a public speaker, and he soon attracted notice at Rome by his vindication of the rights of the Chapter. Oppianicus, who had been Sylla's instrument in carrying out the disfranchisement in Larino, had his own good reasons for dreading to see his work overthrown. With the restoration of political liberty municipal self-government would be restored along with it. He feared Cluentius on personal grounds as well as political. He saw in him his future accuser, and he had a further motive of another kind for wishing to destroy him. Cluentius had not yet made his will, for he would not leave his fortune to his mother, and he could not bring himself to make a disposition in which her name should not be mentioned. In the absence of a will she was his heir-at-law. It was but one more murder, and Oppianicus would at once quit himself of a dangerous antagonist, gratify his wife, and add the lands of the Cluentii to the vast estates which he had accumulated already.

Cluentius was out of health. Cleophantus, the physician by whom he was attended, was a man of eminence and character, whom it was unsafe to approach by the means which he had used so successfully in the poisoning of Dinea. But Cleophantus had a slave who worked in his laboratory, whom Op-

pianicus calculated on finding corruptible, and the assistant by whom medicines are made up is in such cases as useful as his principal. He did not think it prudent to appear in person, but a patrician friend, one of the Fabricii, undertook the business for him; and Fabricius felt his way with the slave through his freedman Scamander.

Villains have an instinct for recognising one another, and rarely make mistakes in the character of the persons whom they address. The necessary tact, however, was wanting to Scamander; and in the class of wretches who were bought like sheep in the market, and might be flung at pleasure into the fishponds to feed the aristocrats' lampreys, a degree of virtue was found at last which was to bring Oppianicus's atrocities to a close. Diogenes—so the slave was called — received Scamander's overtures with apparent acquiescence. He listened, drew Scamander on to reveal the name of his employers, and then whispered the story to his master. Cleophantus carried it to Cluentius. An honest senator, Marcus Bibrius, was taken into counsel; and it was agreed that Oppianicus should be played with till he had committed himself, when punishment could at last overtake him. Diogenes kept up his correspondence with Scamander, and promised to administer the

poison as soon as he was provided with materials. It was arranged that Cluentius should purchase Diogenes, that he might have a skilled attendant to wait upon him in his illness. The conspiracy would then be carried on under Cluentius's own roof, where the proceedings could be conveniently watched, and conversations be overheard. Oppianicus was outmanœuvred at last. Both he and Fabricius were tempted to betray themselves. The poison was conveyed to Diogenes; the money which was to pay for the murder was brought to him, and received in the presence of concealed witnesses. The criminals were caught red-handed, without room for denial or concealment. They were seized and denounced, and brought to immediate trial.

Horrible crimes have, unfortunately, been so frequent in this world that they have no permanent interest for us; and, unless they have been embalmed in poetry, or are preserved by the exceptional genius of accomplished historians, the memory of them rarely survives a single generation. The tragedies of Larino would have passed into oblivion with the lives of those who had witnessed and shuddered at them. Posterity, if it cared to recollect, would have had their curiosity and their sense of justice satisfied if they could have learned that the chief villain was

detected and punished at last; and to revive an interest in a detailed chapter of human wickedness after nearly two thousand years would have been alike superfluous and impossible. The story, however, now assumes features of deeper importance. Oppianicus and his victims are nothing to us. The rise and fall of the Roman Commonwealth is of undying consequence to the political student; and other thousands of years will still have to pass before we shall cease to study the most minute particulars which will interpret to us so remarkable a phenomenon. The judicial investigation into the crimes of Oppianicus was to form an illustration of the incurable corruption of the Roman Senate; and that Senate's most brilliant member—better known to English schoolboys than the most distinguished modern classic (Kikero they now call him; but we are too old to learn the new nomenclature)—was to be the principal instrument in exposing it.

Criminal trials at Rome were conducted before a body of judges or jurymen, the selection of whom had been one of the chief subjects of contention during the recent political struggles. The privileged orders affected to fear that justice would be degraded if the administration of it was extended to persons who were incompetent for so honourable an office.

The people complained that their lives and properties were unsafe in the hands of proud, extravagant, and venal aristocrats. The Senators declared that if members of their own order had not been always pure, the middle classes would be found immeasurably worse. The middle classes, without laying claims to superior virtue, protested that the Senators had already descended to the lowest depths of the abyss of dishonesty.

That the office of a judge, at any rate, might be made one of the most lucrative situations which the State had to offer became apparent in a prosecution which happened about the same time of the Prætor Verres for the plunder of Sicily. In the trial of Verres it was proved that the governor of a Roman province under the Republic, looked on his period of office as an opportunity of making his fortune by extortion and the public sale of justice. To be successful, he must carry off three times as much booty as he expected to be allowed to retain. A third had to be bestowed in buying the goodwill of the consuls, tribunes, and other magistrates; a third in corrupting the juries, when he was called to account by the pillaged provincials; the remaining part only he might calculate on keeping for himself.

The Court which was to try the case of the Larin-

ates was composed of thirty-two Senators. Caius Gracchus had granted the jury-right to the Equites; but it had again been taken from them by Sylla. The judges were now exclusively patricians, the purest blood of which Rome had to boast. Scamander, Fabricius, and Oppianicus were indicted successively for conspiring the murder of Cluentius. The prisoners were tried separately. Though rumour had caught hold of some features of the story, the circumstances were generally unknown. Oppianicus, through his wealth and connections, had secured powerful patrons; and Cicero, who rarely took part in prosecutions, was retained in the first instance to defend Scamander.

Publius Canutius opened the case for Cluentius; and Cicero, though he exerted himself to the utmost, very soon discovered that he had a bad cause. The evidence was absolutely conclusive. Scamander was condemned, and Fabricius was brought to the bar. Cicero withdrew from the case and contented himself with watching it. Fabricius's brother, Cepasius, took his place as advocate; but with no better success. Fabricius, too, was convicted, but with a slight difference in the form of the result. A unanimous verdict was given against Scamander; a single Senator, called Stalenus, voted for the acquittal of Fabri-

cius. There was no more doubt of his guilt than of his freedman's. The evidence against them both was the same. Stalenus had not been bribed, for Fabricius was poor; but he intended to intimate to the rich Oppianicus that he was open to an arrangement when his own turn should come on.

Stalenus was a man of consequence. He had been quæstor, and aspired to the higher offices of State. He had obtained some notoriety in a recent civil case in which one of the parties was a certain Safinius Atella. Safinius had the worst of the argument, and Stalenus had boasted that for a round sum of money he could purchase a verdict notwithstanding. The money was given to him, but Safinius lost his cause, and ill-natured persons had whispered that Stalenus had kept it for himself. Such a transaction, however, if successful and undetected, might pass for a stroke of cleverness. At all events the suspicions attached to it had not interfered with the further employment of this ingenious young nobleman. He was merely observed, and anything singular in his conduct was set down to its right motive.

Oppianicus's case might well be considered desperate. Scamander and Fabricius had been accessories only to a single attempt at murder. The past history of Oppianicus had probably been alluded to generally

in the preliminary trials. He would stand at the bar an object of general abhorrence for various other enormities, and the proofs which had been sufficient to condemn his accomplices would tell with tenfold force against their instigator, whose past career had been so dark. In the vote of Stalenus only some glimmer of hope remained. The Court adjourned for a few days. In the interval Oppianicus made Stalenus's acquaintance, and they soon understood one another. Stalenus told him frankly that his situation was a difficult one, and would probably be expensive. The judges who had condemned the other prisoners would commit manifest perjury if they acquitted Oppianicus. Public feeling being excited, they would be exposed to general opprobrium, and they would require to be well paid for their services. Still, however, he thought it might be managed. He knew his men, and he considered that he could secure fifteen votes out of the thirty-two, which in addition to his own would be sufficient. Money only was necessary: each vote would require £400.

Oppianicus's fortune would be of little use to him if he was convicted. Being a Roman citizen, he was not liable to a sentence of death from a criminal court, but exile and a fine amounting nearly to confiscation were as bad or possibly worse. He

assented to Stalenus's terms, and paid into his hands £6400.

It was understood by this time that a negotiation with the prisoner was going forward. Stalenus had felt his way, dropping hints here and there in whatever quarter they were likely to be operative, and at length the corruptible fifteen had given conditional assurances that they might be relied on. But the terms, as he expected, were high; very little would be left for himself; and he began to reflect that with perfect safety he might keep the whole of it. The honest part of the jury would, he thought, undoubtedly vote for a conviction. Those who had agreed to sell their consciences would be so angry if they were now disappointed that he might count on them with equal certainty, and it would be in vain that after a verdict of guilty such a wretch as Oppianicus would appeal to public opinion. No one would believe him, no one would pity him. Thus the night before the trial came on he informed his friends upon the jury that Oppianicus had changed his mind, and that no money was forthcoming. They were as exasperated as he hoped to find them. He was himself not suspected, and they met the next day in court with a most virtuous resolution that justice should not be baulked of its object.

The voting in a Roman trial was either open or secret, as the Court might decide for itself. Oppianicus not relying too perfectly on his friends, and anxious not to be cheated of the wares for which he had paid, demanded that each judge should give his verdict by word of mouth. The tribune Quinctius, who was secretly his friend, supported him, and his request was agreed to. Every one was aware that there had been bribery, and the members of the jury who were open to bribes were generally well known. It was, of course, assumed that they would vote for an acquittal, and Stalenus and his friends were observed with contemptuous curiosity, but without a doubt of what their judgment would be.

It happened that Stalenus was the first to vote, and two of his intimate associates were the second and third. To the astonishment of every one, all three without the slightest hesitation voted guilty The rest of the judges, or rather the respectable portion of them, were utterly bewildered. The theory of corruption implies that men who take bribes will generally fulfil their contract, nor again do men usually take bribes to vote according to their real convictions. They were assured that Stalenus had been corrupted by some one to give a false verdict. They thought he had been corrupted by Oppianicus;

but he had voted against Oppianicus; he had voted for Cluentius,—therefore it seemed he must have been bribed by Cluentius, and Oppianicus might be innocent after all. Thus argued the outside public almost universally, having heard the story but imperfectly. Thus argued even a section of the judges themselves, and in their confusion five of the more honest of them actually voted for Oppianicus's acquittal. The larger number concluded at last that they must go by the evidence. Stalenus and his friends might have taken money from Cluentius. Cluentius might have been afraid to trust himself entirely to the justice of his cause. But corruption could not alter the truth. Oppianicus was unquestionably guilty, and he was condemned by a large majority.

He for his part was banished, clamouring that he was betrayed, but unable, as Stalenus expected, to obtain a remission of his sentence. In modern eyes such a punishment was immeasurably too lenient. To a Roman who wanted courage to end his misfortunes with his own hand, exile was held to be the most terrible of calamities. Cæsar pleaded against the execution of the accomplices of Catiline, that death ended all things. He would have them live and suffer. 'Life,' said Cicero on the present occasion, 'was worse than death to Oppianicus. No one

believed any longer the old wives' fable of Tartarus. Death would be but a happy release to him.' He left Rome to wander about Italy, as if marked with a curse. Sassia followed him to torment him with her reproaches and infidelities. One day as he was riding his horse threw him. He was mortally injured and died.

So ended Oppianicus. So, however, did not end the consequences of his various villanies. Political passions were again rising. The people in Rome and out of it were clamouring to the skies against the iniquities of the Senate. The story went abroad that a senatorial jury had again been bribed; and being without detailed knowledge of the case, the Roman populace rushed naturally to the conclusion that an innocent man had been condemned. Oppianicus had protested against the verdict, and had denounced his judges. It was enough. The verdict was indisputably corrupt, and a corrupt verdict, as a matter of course, must be a false verdict.

Quinctius the tribune, Oppianicus's friend, encouraged the agitation. It was an opportunity not to be neglected of bringing the Senate into disrepute. Thrice he harangued the General Assembly in the Forum. He insisted that the degraded patricians should be stripped once more of the privileges which

they abused. Cluentius's name became a by-word. He who in his humble way had been the champion of his own townspeople was identified with the hated senatorial monopoly. So furious were the people that for eight years, Cicero says, they would not so much as listen to a word that could be said for him. Every senator who had voted for Oppianicus's condemnation was prosecuted under the Jury Laws. Some were fined, some were expelled from the Senate by the Censors. One of them, Caius Egnatius, was disinherited by his father. The Senate itself was invited to condemn its own members. Not daring to refuse, the Senate saved its conscience by a wise generality, and passed a resolution that any person or persons who had been instrumental in corrupting public justice had been guilty of a heinous offence Finally Cluentius himself was brought to trial, and so hot was public feeling against him that Cicero was obliged to confine his defence to a legal technicality. The law, he said, was for the restraint of corruption in the juries. The juries under Sylla's constitution could consist of senators only, and Cluentius being an Eques, the law could not touch him.

Gradually the outcry died away, melting into the general stream of indignation which in a few years swept away the constitution, and under new forms

made justice possible again. But the final act of the Cluentian drama had still to be played out. Again Cluentius was to appear before a tribunal of Roman judges. Again Cicero was to defend him—no longer under a quibble, but on the merits of the whole case, into which at last it was possible to enter.

From the speech which Cicero delivered on this occasion we have gathered our story. It is not a favourable specimen of his oratorical power. There is no connection in the events. There is no order of time. We are hurried from date to date, from place to place. The same person is described under different names; the same incident in different words. The result is a mass of threads so knotted, twisted, and entangled, that only patient labour can sort them out into intelligible arrangement.

What Cicero lacks in method, however, he makes up in earnestness. He was evidently supremely affected by the combination of atrocities and misunderstandings by which an innocent, well-deserving man was likely to be overwhelmed.

The various lovers of Sassia had been either murdered or had died, or had deserted her. She had lost much of her ill-gained fortunes. She had grown too old for the further indulgence of her pleasant

vices One desire alone remained, and had devoured the rest—a desire for revenge upon her son Cluentius. In the prejudiced condition of public feeling at Rome, any wily accusation against him might be expected to obtain a hearing. Having escaped the prosecution for the bribery of the judges, he was charged with having murdered one of his friends, whose property he hoped to inherit. The attempt was clumsy and it failed. The friend was proved to have died where Cluentius could have had no access to him; and a nephew, and not Cluentius, was his heir. The next accusation was of having tried to poison the surviving son of Oppianicus. Cluentius and the younger Oppianicus had been together at a festival of Larino. Another youth who was also present there had died a few days later, and it was alleged that he had drunk by mistake from a cup which had been prepared for Sassia's stepson. But again the evidence broke down. There was no proof that the death was caused by poison, or that Cluentius was in any way connected with it.

The accursed woman, though twice baffled, would not abandon her object. In both instances proof of malice had been wanting. Cluentius had no object in perpetrating either of the crimes of which she had accused him. If he had no grudge against the

young Oppianicus, however, he had undoubtedly hated his father, and she professed to have discovered that the father had not died, as had been reported, by the fall from his horse, but had been poisoned by a cake which had been administered to him at Cluentius's instigation. The method in which Sassia went to work to make out her case throws a fresh and hideous light on the Roman administration of justice in the last days of liberty. She produced two witnesses who were both slaves. To one of them, Nicostratus, a Greek, she owed an old grudge. He had belonged to Oppianicus the elder, and had revealed certain infidelities of hers which had led to inconvenience. The other, Strato, was the slave of a doctor who had attended Oppianicus after his accident. Since neither of these men were willing to say what she required them to say of their own accord, she demanded according to custom that they should be tortured. The Roman law did not acknowledge any rights in these human chattels: a slave on the day of his bondage ceased to be a man. Nicostratus and Strato were racked till the executioners were weary, but nothing could be extracted from them. A distinguished advocate who was present, and was not insensible to pity, said that the slaves were being tortured not to make them tell the truth, but to make

them lie. The court took the same view, and they were released.

Once more Sassia was defeated, but she waited her opportunity. Three years later, the orator Hortensius, a general protector of rogues, was elected to the consulate. The vindictiveness with which she had come forward as the prosecutrix of her own son had injured her cause. She made one more effort, and this time she prevailed on the young Oppianicus, who had meanwhile married her daughter, to appear in her place. She had purchased Strato after his escape from the torture, and had power of life and death over him. He had murdered a fellow slave; and it was alleged that when he confessed to this crime he had confessed to the other also. He was crucified, and to prevent his telling inconvenient truths upon the cross, his tongue was cut out before he was nailed upon it. On the strength of his pretended deposition, a criminal process was once more instituted against Cluentius before a Roman jury. The story had by this time become so notorious, and the indignation of the provinces had been so deeply roused, that deputations from every town in the south of Italy came to the Capital to petition in Cluentius's favour. How the trial ended is unknown. It may be hoped that he was acquitted—but it is uncertain.

Innocent men have suffered by millions in this world. As many guilty wretches have escaped, and seemed to triumph; but the vengeance which follows upon evil acts does not sleep because individuals are wronged. The penalty is exacted to the last farthing from the community which permits injustice to be done. And the Republican Commonwealth of Rome was fast filling the measure of its iniquities. In another half-century perjured juries and corrupted magistrates had finished their work; the world could endure them no longer, and the free institutions which had been the admiration of mankind were buried under the throne of the Cæsars.

LUCIAN.

THE men of genius who had the misfortune, under the later Roman Emperors, to be blind to the truth of Christianity have been punished by a neglect which they do not wholly deserve. With Tacitus the era closes in which a Roman of ability has been allowed to have shut his eyes to the light without wilful sin. Thenceforward all men of intellectual reputation who remained unconverted have been held guilty by Christendom of deliberate unbelief. Their writings have been thrown aside as either mischievous or useless. The age itself and the character of their contemporaries has been left to be described by the Fathers of the Church; and unless for special reasons, or by exceptional and curious students, the last representatives of the old classical literature remain generally unread. Nor is this neglect diminishing or likely to diminish. When modern books were scarce, any writing which had value in it was prized

at its true worth. Plutarch was Shakespeare's chief authority for his Greeks and Romans. Men of culture, who were weary of the quarrels between Catholics and Protestants, preferred the calmer atmosphere of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. The lofty spiritualism of the Alexandrian Platonists was a favourite food with the Cambridge philosophers of the seventeenth century. The exacting demands of modern literature, however, leave inadequate leisure for the study of even the most accomplished of the classical writers. Modern languages encroach more and more on the old domain of Greek and Latin, and either divide the schools with them or threaten to expel them altogether. The ready quotation from Horace has disappeared from society and almost from the Senate house. Still less of leisure has been left for the less polished, if not less interesting, writers of the succeeding centuries; and except an occasional metaphysician, who makes excursions into Proclus or Plotinus, or an anti-Christian controversialist, who goes for assistance to the fragments of Celsus or Porphyry, it is rare that any one wanders aside into the pages of authors who are looked on as degenerate classics of dangerous tendency, without the literary merit which might compensate for their spiritual deficiency.

Our indifference costs us more than we are aware of. It is supremely desirable that we should be acquainted with the age in which Christianity became the creed of civilised mankind, and we learn but half the truth from the Christian Fathers. Whether we regard Christianity as a miracle from without, or as developed from within, out of the conscience and intellect of man, we perceive, at any rate, that it grew by natural causes, that it commended itself by argument and example, that it was received or rejected according to the moral and mental condition of those to whom it was addressed. We shall understand the history of its triumph only when we see the heathen world as the heathen world saw itself. The most indispensable guides in such an inquiry are the writers who remained unconvinced. Nor is it uninteresting to see why they were unconvinced, or how, when they noticed its existence, the new creed appeared to them.

We invite our readers to forget their prejudices, and to accompany us, so far as our few pages will allow, on an expedition into Lucian. Every one has heard of Lucian's name; nine people out of every ten, if asked who Lucian was, would be ready with an answer that he was a scoffer and an atheist, and in that answer would show decisively that they had

never read a page of him. The censure and the ignorance rise from the same source. On the strength of a Dialogue, which has been proved to be spurious, Lucian has been denounced as a direct enemy of Christianity. Lucian is supposed to have encouraged with his satires the hatred which took shape in the persecutions. He has been, therefore, spoken of systematically as a special servant of Satan, as a person whose company decent people were bound to avoid.

Yet Lucian, in his genuine writings, mentions the Christians but once, and then only as a simple-minded sect whose credulity made them the easy dupes of quacks and charlatans. He had looked at Christianity, and had passed it by as one of the thousand illusions which were springing like mushrooms in the hotbed of Greco-Asiatic speculation. The abominations of paganism and the cant of the popular philosophers were the real objects of his detestation; and, so far as concerned the common enemy, the Fathers and Lucian were fighting on the same side. Yet it is doubtful whether, had they known him as he was, he would have been regarded as a welcome ally, or otherwise as anything but intolerable to them. The lightning-like mockery with which Lucian strikes at folly and imposture was unfavourable, however legitimate its objects, to the generation of a believing

spirit. To the Fathers the pagan cultus was a worship of devils, to Lucian it was a dishonest or base affectation; and his dissecting knife cuts occasionally into theories where their own nerves were susceptible. His detestation of falsehood was a passion. No καλὸν ψεῦδος, no edifying falsehood, no ideal loveliness or supposed beneficent influence to be derived from illusion could blind his judgment or seduce his allegiance to truth. He lived in an age when the established creeds were a mockery, and philosophy was a juggle of words; when itinerant thaumaturgists, like Proteus or Apollonius, were the favourites of emperors and were regarded by millions upon millions as representatives or incarnations of the gods; while politicians and men of the world were labouring in desperate conservatism to keep the pagan religion on its feet, for fear society should fall to pieces if it was openly confessed to be untrue. With this ignoble terror, and with the quackery and dishonesty which were the inevitable fruit of it, Lucian lived in perpetual war, striking at it with a pungency of satire which is perhaps without its equal in literature. He has the keenness of Voltaire, the moral indignation, disguised behind his jests, of Swift; but while Lucian, no more than Swift or Voltaire, will spare the scoundrel any single lash

which is his due, he, like Shakespeare, has still a pity for the poor wretch, as if to be a scoundrel was itself the sharpest of penalties. When Charon's boat-load of ghosts is carried before the judgment bar of Rhadamanthus, a powerful nobleman is found among them who had exhausted the list of possible human depravities — cruelty and avarice, gluttony and lust indulged beyond the limits of nature. Witness after witness deposes to the dreadful truth. His *bed* tells its tale of horrors. His lamp, unable to say what had been done in daylight when it was not present, details its catalogue of midnight orgies. Each crime, discovered or undiscovered, was supposed to leave its scar upon the soul. The prisoner, being ordered to strip, discloses a person so wealed and marked that the natural substance of it was nowhere visible. Rhadamanthus exclaims in horror for some new punishment adequate to such enormous villany. A poor cobbler standing by suggests that justice will be vindicated sufficiently if the cup of Lethe, which each shade was permitted to drink as he passed from the dread tribunal, should in this instance be withheld. To remember what he had done in life would be retribution enough for the worst of criminals, without further torture.

But there is an interest in Lucian beyond his

satire and beyond his literary excellence. Lucian more than any other writer, pagan or Christian, enables us to see what human beings were, how they lived, what they thought, felt, said, and did in the centuries when paganism was expiring and Christianity was taking the place of it.

The kingdom of heaven, it was said, was like a grain of mustard seed. The world of spirit and the world of matter are alike full of such seeds, full of the germs of living organisms, waiting for the fitting conditions in which they can take root and grow. The germ, as it unfolds, gathers its substance out of the soil in which it is rooted, and out of the atmosphere which it inhales; and it is to that soil, to that atmosphere, and to the elements of which they are composed, that we must look, if we would understand how and why at any particular time a new form of organised life makes its appearance. Critics have wearied themselves in searching for the origin of the Gospels, and arrive at nothing. They would discover the secret of the life of Christianity, and they are like children digging at the roots of a plant to discover how and why it grows. The plant withers when the root is exposed, but the network of entangled fibre tells them nothing which they desired to know. The historical facts recorded in the Gospels

formed the tissue of the seed out of which the Christian Church was developed, but the tissue of the seed is not the life of it. How the Gospels were written, or when or by whom, is concealed, as the grain when growing is concealed in the earth. The life of the Church was a new ideal, a new spiritual principle to which humanity turned for deliverance from the poison of the established theology and philosophy. In Lucian we learn what that theology and that philosophy was, and how the belief or want of belief in them was affecting intellect and morals. He has been called an apostate Christian. It is perfectly evident that he neither had been a Christian, nor, with such a mind as he possessed and at the age at which he lived, ever could have been a Christian. Two centuries later, when Christianity had become the sole authoritative teacher of practical morality, Lucian would have examined with reverential interest a doctrine which was exerting so excellent an influence over the education of the human race. In point of fact he never gave to it more than passing attention. To him it was but one of many struggling sects, an unintelligible offshoot of Judaism. He was constitutionally incredulous, and the atmosphere of lies with which he was enveloped hardened further his natural distrust of new opinions. Tales of miracles

and mysteries, so far from acting as inducements to command his attention, would only be occasions of suspicion. Had he even looked seriously into the Christian formulas of faith, and had found himself invited to believe that the child of a Galilean artisan had 100 years before been born of a virgin, had worked miracles, had been put to death, had gone down to Hades and had again returned to life, he would have answered that he could match the story by a hundred parallels from his own contemporary experience. Each generation produced its own swarm of pretenders to supernatural powers. Life itself would be gone before he could have examined minutely into the claims of each of them. An aged student in one of his Dialogues confessed to have spent 60 years in comparing the schools of philosophy, still hoping that he would find the truth, and still unable to decide in which of them the truth was to be found. Lucian tells him that he has missed his road, that life is action, not speculation, that one good deed is better than a thousand syllogisms; and in some such terms it is likely he would have replied also, had Justin Martyr attempted to make a convert of him.

But he was not careless in such matters. He had taken exceptional pains to inquire into the claims and

expose the impostures of the pretenders of his own time.

A sketch of the character of Alexander of Abonotichus, an earlier Cagliostro, is dedicated to his friend Celsus, the same Celsus who, after his death, was attacked by Origen. More interesting, from the mention in it of the Christians, is the account of the life and death of Peregrinus, whom Lucian knew and whose extraordinary end he witnessed.

This person was born in a village in Armenia. He commenced his public career, after growing to manhood, by murdering his father. To conceal himself he joined the Christians at a distant town, where he became professor of exegetic theology, revised some of their sacred books, wrote others, and seemingly was made into a bishop. He was thrown into prison in one of the persecutions. The Christians behaved to him with the affection which they never failed to show to any of the brethren in distress. They raised subscriptions for him; they brought him food; widows and orphans watched about his cell, and with the gaoler's connivance shared the solitude of his confinement. At length he was released, but the sacred character which he had assumed sat uneasily upon him. His disease was a passion for notoriety. Lucian says that he shocked the Christians

by eating forbidden food; more likely he developed some new form of heresy. He was excommunicated, or at any rate he was expelled from the Church, and joined the Cynic philosophers. In this capacity he went to Rome, where he achieved a new celebrity by the insolence of his tongue. He assailed Marcus Aurelius himself with his ribaldry. The wise emperor rewarded him with the impunity of a privileged fool, and the public, to whom there is no pleasure greater than to hear good men sneered at and libelled, for a time applauded the libeller. But the novelty wore off. Peregrinus was again sinking into a neglect which he could not endure. To rouse the interest of men once more he announced that at the next Olympian Festival he would give the world a lesson in the contempt of death, and would publicly burn himself. He expected that his admirers would interfere, but curiosity or indifference kept them silent. He had committed himself and was too vain to retract. The pile was raised. The fire was kindled. Peregrinus leapt into it and perished. Lucian, who was himself present, being eagerly questioned as to what had taken place by one of the martyr's disciples, answered a fool according to his folly, and told him that an eagle had risen out of the flames and had soared into the sky. The story which he had himself invented

passed at once into the popular belief, and was afterwards retailed to him by another spectator, who declared that he had witnessed the extraordinary portent with his own eyes.

After such experience Lucian was not likely to give easy credence to tales of miracles, and Christianity had not attained in his lifetime a position of the commanding importance which would have induced him to study its meaning with real attention.

He was born at Samosata, not far from Antioch, about the year 130 A.D. His father was a sculptor, and Lucian was intended for the same pursuit. In a sketch which he calls 'A Dream,' he describes his difficulties in the choice of his profession under the familiar shape of the two Fairies. The Genius of mechanical art and the Genius of intellectual culture each work upon him their powers of persuasion. The first promised him employment and competence, the second promised him poverty and wisdom. He had shown special gifts as a child for modelling in clay. Had he been contented with a narrow career he might have achieved the eminence with which the first fairy tempted him. But he chose the nobler and higher course. He left his mallet and chisel. He travelled; he practised as a lawyer. He studied in the schools of philosophy at Athens. His life

was honourably innocent, and if the fairy kept her word about poverty, Lucian seems never to have seriously suffered from it. The minuteness of his description of the situation suggests that he was at one time a dependent on some wealthy Roman patron. A Roman noble in the second century thought his establishment incomplete without a domestic philosopher to amuse his guests, correct his verses, and applaud his witticisms; and men of genius who might have been distinguished accepted the degrading position for the convenient ease which it held out to them. Lucian, as a warning to a friend who was meditating such a step for himself, describes what he is to expect. A young man gains a reputation at college. The world takes notice of him. A great man invites him to dinner, and the entertainment is got up specially on his behalf. He finds himself in a saloon more splendid than he had ever seen. He is uneasy in his chair. The dishes are strange to him. He does not know how to eat, or sit, or use his napkin. He watches his neighbours. He dreads the ridicule of the servants. His health is drunk, and he has to make a speech. He stammers through it in misery, drinks more than is good for him, and wakes the next morning sick and miserable. But he has given satisfaction. He is taken into the great

house, and is envied by his friends for his supposed good fortune. Lucian traces sadly his downward progress, after sacrificing his liberty and self-respect to a low desire for luxurious living. His intellect becomes debased. He forgets the little that he knew. He ceases to entertain his master, and is discarded for a new favourite. Having lost courage to encounter the hardships of independence, he is content to remain a neglected parasite of a patron who has forgotten his existence. He is set to travel in the same carriage with my lady's maid, and is charged with the care of my lady's pug dog.

If Lucian ever himself made an experiment of this gilded slavery, he resumed his freedom before he had allowed it to injure him. He rose to be the friend and equal of the chosen few of his age whose good opinion was best worth possessing. In mature life he was appointed by Marcus Aurelius to a high civil post in Egypt, and lived to be a very old man. His writings are not voluminous, but they belong to the rare class which will be read with delight as long as human nature remains unchanged; and to us, in the present speculative condition of our minds, and confronted with problems so like those which troubled Lucian's contemporaries, they have an exceptional and peculiar interest.

Of the true nature of our existence on this planet, of the origin of our being, and of the meaning and purpose of it; of what is life and what is death; and of the nature of the rule which is exerted over us, we really know nothing. We live merely on the crust or rind of things. The inner essence is absolutely concealed from us. But though these questions admit of no conclusive answer, there is something in our character which perpetually impels us to seek for an answer. Hope and fear, conscience and imagination, suggest possibilities, and possibilities become probabilities when allied with high and noble aspirations. We feel the action upon us of forces which we cannot see. The world in which we live we perceive to be moving in obedience to some vast over-mastering power. We connect our inward emotions with what we outwardly perceive. Observation of facts creates a scheme or form into which our own souls infuse a spirit, and thus arise theogonies or theologies which for a series of ages seize possession of human belief, take control of conduct, and silence, if they fail to satisfy, the questionings of the intellect.

Such, undoubtedly, however degraded they became, were once the pagan religions. Incredible and absurd as they appear on first acquaintance with them, they reveal, when inspected more closely,

essential facts at the heart of them. They reveal generally a rude observation of the simplest astronomical phenomena, a recognition of the mysterious character of physical life, a perception of the eternal difference between nobleness and baseness of conduct, and they contain vague aspirations after immortality.

The convictions and opinions thus honestly formed clothed themselves in a dress of myth and allegory, and the imaginative costume was no more than a graceful drapery of ideas which were easily seen through it. But knowledge outgrew its infant cycle. Imagination flowed in new channels, and no longer pursued the sacred legend to its source. Poetry became prose. The picturesque fable became a literal fact, and when claiming to be a fact became a mischievous lie. The loves of the gods and goddesses, transparent symbols of the workings of natural forces, became demoralising examples of vice. The system without the clue to its meaning was no longer credible, and the conflict began between piety, which dreaded to be irreverent in refusing to believe, and conscience, which dared not profess upon the lips a creed which was felt to be false.

Under such conditions the keenest intellects are brought once more face to face with the limits of attainable knowledge. The problems to which faith

had provided an answer are again recognised as insoluble as soon as the faith has disappeared; and the painful questions have again to be wrestled with, which had been concealed behind the accepted traditions of healthier and happier ages.

If we may judge from the prevailing tone of modern popular literature, from the loud avowals of incredulity on one side and the lamentations on the other on the spread of infidel opinions, it seems as if, after sixteen hundred years of satisfied belief, which came in with Christianity, we were passing once more into a cycle of analogous doubts; and the sentiments of so robust a thinker as Lucian under the same trials are the footprints of a friend who has travelled before us the road on which we are entering. We hear him telling us in every sentence to keep a sound heart in us; to tell no lies; to do right whatever may befall us; never to profess to believe what we know that we do not believe; to look phantoms in the face, and to be sure that they cannot hurt us if we are true to ourselves.

But Lucian must speak for himself. We offer our readers a translation of one out of his many Dialogues, not as more celebrated than the rest, or as exceptionally superior; but as being the most characteristic on the special subject of which we have

been speaking. It may be called *The Twilight of the Gods* of paganism. It describes the dismay in the Pantheon when the Olympian divinities perceived that men were ceasing to believe in them, and were affected with the ludicrous alarm that if not believed in they might cease to exist.

The scene opens in heaven. Zeus is seen walking up and down, muttering to himself; others of the gods, perceiving that he is uneasy, approach him to learn what is amiss.

The Dialogue begins theatrically, iambics and hexameters alternating.

SCENE.—*Heaven.*

ZEUS *in the foreground.* *Enter* HERMES, ATHENE, *and* HERE.

Hermes.—What ails you, Zeus? Why do you mutter so?
Why pale and greensick pace you to and fro,
Like a philosopher? Impart your grief;
A sympathising friend may lend relief.

Athene.—Aye, my dear father Kronion, my prince, my monarch of monarchs,
I thy grey-eyed daughter, thy Trito-born, kneeling beseech thee,
Speak. Conceal it no longer, the sorrow that weighs on thy spirit;
Why dost thou sigh so deeply, and why is thy countenance troubled?

Zeus.—There is no agony, no wrong, no ill

Of such o'ermastering potency, but still
An immortal God may brave it if he will.

Athene.—Great Heaven, what words! what next are we to fear?

Zeus.—Oh wretches, wretches, spawn of sin and earth!
Oh to what woe, Prometheus, gav'st thou birth!

Athene.—What is it? Tell us; none but friends are here.

Zeus.—Oh ye loud echoing thunders, ye lightnings, burst from the cloud bank.

Athene.—Moderate these wild storms. Euripides fails us. We are unskilled in these rhymes; and cannot keep pace with you.

Here.—You suppose we do not understand what is the matter.
You presume too much on our simplicity.

Zeus.—Didst thou but know, thou wouldst be sad as I.

Here.—I know generally. You are in love again, and practice has taught me to be patient. You have found another Semele, or Europa, or Danae. You are going to make a bull of yourself again, or a Satyr, or a shower of gold to run through the roof into the beloved's bosom. There are the usual symptoms, sighs, tears, and pale cheeks; all undoubted tokens of love.

Zeus.—Sweet creature! and you think I am disturbed by trifles like these.

Here.—What else can it be then? You, the supreme God, in serious trouble!

Zeus.—I tell you, Here, we are all in trouble. Our very existence as Gods is in peril. It stands on the edge of a razor, as men say, whether we are to be honoured as we have been, or to be neglected and turn into nothing.

Here.—Has a new race of giants been born? Have the Titans broken prison and taken arms again?

Zeus.—Ah no, not that. There is no fear on that side.

Here.—On what side then? What imaginable danger can be threatening us?

Zeus.—Only yesterday, my Here, only yesterday, Timocles the Stoic and Damis the Epicurean fell into an argument before a large and distinguished audience on the nature of Providence. Timocles was on our side. Damis maintained either that we had no existence, or, at least, that we had no influence over human affairs. The argument was not concluded, but the disputants separated agreeing to meet again and finish it, and all the world is in a fever to know which of the two will win. You see the danger. We depend on a single man, either to continue as we are, or to sink into mere names.

Here.—A serious affair, no doubt. I don't wonder that you are uneasy.

Zeus.—And you thought it was only a fresh Danae! Ah well! But what is to be done? You, Hermes, Athene, Here, give me your opinion.

Hermes.—If I were you I would bring it before Parliament. Call the General Assembly.

Here.—My advice is the same.

Athene.—It is not mine, father. I would not make a scandal and let the world see that I was alarmed. Surely we can arrange that Timocles shall beat Damis, and have the best of the argument.

Hermes.—That is not so easy. We shall be found out, and if we interfere in a matter personal to ourselves we shall be thought unconstitutional.

Zeus.—Hermes is right. Call the Parliament. Let all the Gods attend.

Hermes.—Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! All the Gods are required to meet now for important business in the General Assembly.

Zeus.—Use better language, Hermes. Your proclamation is too bare and inadequate.

Hermes.—How would you have it, Zeus?

Zeus.—How would I have it? I would have it set out with metre and grandeur, and a poetic dignity equal to the weight of the occasion. The Gods won't stir for prose.

Hermes.—Where is a bard to be found? I am no poet. My lines will halt with uneven lengths, and you will laugh at me. Why, now and then you laugh at the verses of Apollo himself; though his oracles are so mystifying that you hardly think of his metre.

Zeus.—Take a proclamation out of Homer. I daresay you remember lines enough for that.

Hermes.—I shall not make a good job of it, but I will try.

> Come each masculine God, and come each feminine also,
> Come every single River, except Oceanus only,
> Come each Nymph and each Faun, come all to the Hall of Assembly.
> All who can challenge a right to share in the banquet of Heaven.
> You, the inferior orders, the middle and lower classes,
> Seat yourselves under the salt, where the steam ascends from the altar.

Zeus.—Good, Hermes, good! Here they come. [*Enter Gods from all sides of Heaven.*] Place them in order of merit. The gold Gods first, then the silver, then the ivory, bronze, and stone; and give precedence to any work of Phidias, or Alcamenes, or Myron, or Euphrenor, or other artist of distinction. The rank and file must stay together at a distance, being here only to fill the Hall.

Hermes.—Your directions shall be obeyed. But stay; suppose a hideous gold idol comes, weighing many talents. Is he to rank above the the marble and bronze of Phidias? How is that to be?

Zeus.—You must observe the rule. Gold ranks first.

Hermes.—I perceive—we are a plutocracy, not an aristocracy. This way the gold Gods! this way to the reserved benches! Bah! they are all barbarians. The Greeks are beautiful—they are faultless in form and feature—but the most precious of them are only ivory. The few of gilt wood are rotten, with a colony of mice in their entrails. Bardis and Atys, and Mithras, and Men are of solid substantial bullion.

Posidon.—Do you mean to say, Hermes, that this dog-faced Egyptian rascal is to sit above me?

Hermes.—So it is ordered, my shaker of the earth. The Corinthians had no gold to spare, and Lysippus made you of bronze. The Egyptian is above you by whole metallic degrees. Look at his snout—and real gold too! You ought to be proud to sit under such a god.

Aphrodite.—You will give me a front seat, at any rate, Hermes? All the world calls me golden.

Hermes.—I cannot see it, my dear. You appear to me to have been cut from the quarry at Pentelicus. By the grace of Praxiteles you became Aphrodite, and were sold to the Cnidians.

Aphrodite.—But I call Homer to witness. He calls me golden a hundred times.

Hermes.—So Homer calls Apollo golden; but there Apollo sits on the lower form. Thieves have stolen his gold crown and his lute strings, and you may sit by him and be thankful that you are not among the maid-servants.

Colossus of Rhodes.—Who is the equal of me? I am the first of gods, for I am the biggest. My friends at Rhodes made me so. I cost as much as sixteen gold gods of average size. That is what I am worth, and there is the art besides.

Hermes.—What am I to do here, your Majesty? The substance of him is bronze, no doubt; but take him at his money value, and he must be among the upper ten.

Zeus (*aside*).—What is he doing here, disturbing the assembly and making the rest of us look small?—My best of Rhodians, we are aware how precious you are; but if I place you among the gold gods, they must all move to make room for you, and you must sit by yourself. You fill the Pnyx with one of your thighs. Will you kindly stand? You can stoop when you want to hear.

Hermes.—Another difficulty. Here are Dionysus and Hercules, both of first-rate workmanship; both by the same artist Lysippus; both sons of your own. Which is to sit first of them? They are at words about it.

Zeus.—We waste time, Hermes. We should have been at work long since. Let them sit any way for the present; we can settle their precedence afterwards.

Hermes.—Hercules! what a noise they make! 'Where is the nectar?' cries one. 'The ambrosia is out,' cries another. 'The hecatombs are not fairly divided,' says a third; 'they are meant for all of us; share and share alike!'

Zeus.—Tell them to be quiet, Hermes. I must now inform them why they are assembled.

Hermes.—Half of them won't understand me. I can speak no language but Greek, and here are Scythians, Persians, Thracians, and I know not who. I will sign to them with my hand.

Zeus.—Do so.

Hermes.—They are mute as sophists. Speak away; they are all attention to hear what is coming.

Zeus.—Oh! my son, my son, what am I to do? You know how ready I generally am on these occasions.

Hermes.—That I do. You terrify me sometimes when you

talk so bigly of hanging us all, and earth and sea to boot, on that gold chain of yours.

Zeus.—And now—whether it be the occasion, or all this crowd of gods, I know not—but I have forgot my speech. I had prepared it carefully, with a splendid exordium, and I can't remember a word.

Hermes.—This is ruin. Every eye is fixed on you. Your silence makes them expect wonders.

Zeus.—Shall I start with the established line from Homer,

Hear me, all ye Gods, and all ye Goddesses also?

Hermes.—Nonsense. I made mess enough with Homer. Do as the orators do; take the opening of one of Demosthenes' Philippics, altering a word or two.

Zeus.—Aye, that will do. A few well-turned expressions and we are all right. Here goes:—

The most splendid present which I could bestow upon you gentlemen Gods,[1] would be less acceptable in your present disposition than an explanation of the cause for which I have now assembled you together. I must beseech you, therefore, to attend to the words which I am about to utter. The time in which we are living, gentlemen, calls upon us to exert ourselves with a voice all but articulate, and we sit still in negligent indifference—— But my Demosthenes has run out. Let me tell you plainly what is the matter. Yesterday, you are aware, Captain Pious gave a thankoffering for the preservation of his vessel, which was nearly foundering. Such of us as were invited were entertained at Piræus. When we broke up after dinner, I, as it was still early, strolled up into the city, meditating on the shabby provision which Captain Pious had made. Sixteen of us had sate down. On the

[1] ὦ ἄνδρες θεοί instead of the ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι. The humour is lost in the translation.

altar there was but a single cock, and that one too old to crow. The few grains of incense were mildewed, and would not burn, and there was scarce a whiff for the nose of one of us. The wretch had promised hecatombs when he was running on the rocks. I was standing in the Porch engaged in these reflections, when I observed a crowd about the hall, some inside, some pressing about the door. I heard voices loud in contradiction. I understood at once that a couple of professors were disputing, and I determined to hear what it was about. By good luck I had a thick cloud on. I adjusted my dress, gave my beard a pull to make myself like a philosopher, and elbowed my way in. There I found a good-for-nothing scamp of an Epicurean named Damis, and the respected and excellent Stoic, Timocles, arguing together. Timocles was perspiring with eagerness, and hoarse with shouting. Damis was turning him into ridicule and driving him distracted with his coolness. The subject of discussion was ourselves. Damis maintained that we had no concern with men and their doings, and almost denied our existence. Indeed, this was what he meant, and many of his audience applauded. Timocles took our part, passionately and indignantly. He argued well of Providence. He dwelt on the order which is observed throughout nature. He was not without his friends, but he was unequal to his work. He spoke badly. The party in favour of Damis grew larger every moment, till, seeing what was likely to happen, I ordered up Night to bring the meeting to an end, leaving them to finish the argument to-morrow. I mixed in the crowd as the people went home. I found most of them, I am sorry to say, on Damis's side; a few only remained undecided till they had heard out what Timocles had to reply. You will now, my divine friends, be no longer at a loss to understand your summons to this assembly. From men we derive our honour

and glory and our revenues. Let men once conceive either that we do not exist, or that we have nothing to do with them, and victims, incense, and prayers will cease to be offered to us. We shall be left sitting idle here in Heaven, banquets and ceremonies at an end, perishing of hunger. It concerns us all, gentlemen, it concerns us all. What is to be done? How is Timocles to get the best of the argument and answer Damis sufficiently? I have no confidence in Timocles. He means well, but unless we help him he will certainly be beaten. Give the usual notice, Hermes. Any God who can give advice in our present emergency, let him rise and speak.

Hermes.—Oyez oyez, oyez! Order in the assembly! Any God who desires to speak is requested to stand up.——— What, all motionless! All struck dumb at what you have heard!

Momus.—

Turning each one of you all into water and clods of the valley.

If freedom of speech is permitted here, Father Zeus, I should like to make an observation.

Zeus.—Speak on. You have nothing to fear. We shall be delighted to hear you.

Momus.—Listen then, Gods. I will address you, as men say, from the heart. I have long seen how things were going. It has long been evident to me that philosophers would rise up and pick holes in us. By Themis, I cannot blame Epicurus and his disciples for the conclusions at which they have arrived about us. What other conclusions could they arrive at, when they saw the confusion around them? Good men neglected, perishing in penury or slavery; and profligate wretches wealthy, honoured, and powerful. Sacrilegious temple-robbers undiscovered and unpunished; devotees and saints beaten and crucified. With such phenomena before

them, of course men have doubted our existence. The oracles, forsooth, ought to be an evidence to them. An oracle tells Crœsus that, if he crosses the Halys, he will destroy a mighty empire; but it does not explain whether he is to destroy his enemy's empire or his own. An oracle says

Many a mother's son shall in thee, O Salamis, perish.

Mothers produce children in Greece as well as in Persia. There are the Sacred Poems. Oh yes! Poems which tell them that we have our loves and our fights; that we quarrel one with another; that some of us are in chains; that a thousand things go wrong with us, while we pretend to immortal blessedness. What can they do but hold us in contempt? We affect surprise that men who are not fools decline to put their faith in us. We ought rather to be pleased if there is a man left to say his prayers. We are among ourselves, with no strangers present. Tell us, then, Zeus, have you really ever taken pains to distinguish between good men and bad? You cannot say you have. Theseus, not you, destroyed the robbers in Attica. As far as you and Providence were concerned, Sciron and Pity-o-campus might have murdered and plundered to the end of time. If Eurystheus had not looked into matters and sent Hercules upon his labours, little would you have troubled yourself with the Hydras and the Centaurs. Let us be candid. All that we have really cared for has been a steady altar service. Everything else has been left to chance. And now men are opening their eyes. They perceive that whether they pray or don't pray, go to church or don't go to church, makes no difference to them. And we are receiving our deserts. Our advocates are silenced. The Epicuruses and the Damises carry the world before them. If you wish mankind to reverence you again you must remove the cause of their disbelief. For my-

self, I care little how it goes. I was never much respected at the best of times. Now they may think as they please.

Zeus.—Don't mind this rude fellow. He is always so. Any one can pick holes, as the divine Demosthenes says. The difficulty is to discover what is to be done. And now that Momus has finished you will give me your suggestions.

Posidon.—My place, you are aware, is under water at the bottom of the sea. To the best of my ability I take care of sailors, help ships to harbours, and keep down the winds. At the same time I am not indifferent to matters here, and to prevent more trouble, I recommend you to knock Damis down with a thunderbolt. He is plausible: we shall prevent his words from gaining more hold; and we shall give a proof that we are not to be trifled with.

Zeus.—You jest, Posidon. Have you forgotten that the manner of every man's death is predestined for him? Do you suppose that if it had rested with me I would have let the robber escape who cut off my gold curls at Olympia, that weighed six pounds apiece? What could you do with the fisherman that stole your trident at Geræstus? Besides, to put Damis out of the way would only show that we were afraid of what he might say, and didn't dare to let the case be argued out.

Posidon.—It seems to me to be the easiest road out of the difficulty.

Zeus.—A most dense notion, Posidon, worthy only of a sea-pig.

Posidon.—If my idea is piggish, find a better of your own.

Apollo.—May a beardless youth venture to address the assembly.

Momus.—This is not a time to stand on ceremony, Apollo. You are within the law too. You have been of age these many

years. Why, you are one of the twelve. I am not sure that you were not in the Privy Council in Cronos's time. None of your infant airs. If your own chin is smooth, you have a son, Æsculapius here, whose beard is long enough. Give us some of that philosophy which you have learnt from the Muses in Helicon.

Apollo.—It does not rest with you, Momus, to give leave or refuse it. If Zeus permits, however, I may show, perhaps, that my conversation with the Muses has not been thrown away.

Zeus.—Say on, my child. I allow you.

Apollo.—This Timocles appears a worthy, pious man, and is well thought of as a professor. His lecture class is large. His fees are heavy, and he speaks fluently and convincingly among his own friends and disciples. On a public platform, unhappily, he is less satisfactory. His accent is not good. He lacks presence of mind, and is confused. He labours to produce an effect with fine words, and then he is laughed at. Those who are familiar with the Stoic formulas say that he understands his subject well enough, but he wants clearness of exposition. He loses his head when he is cross-questioned and flounders into absurdities. Now, the object is to make him speak so that he shall be comprehended.

Momus.—As you appreciate plainness, Apollo, it is a pity you don't practise it. Your oracles usually want another oracle to interpret them. How do you propose to cure these faults in Timocles?

Apollo.—Couldn't we provide a junior counsel to take Timocles's ideas and put them into words?

Momus.—Utterly childish. . . . A leader in an important case to be unable to express his own thoughts at a meeting of philosophers! Damis is to speak for himself. Timocles is to whisper his notions to his junior, and his junior is to find the

rhetoric without understanding what he is saying. That will be too absurd. We must find a better expedient than that. My fine fellow, you are a prophet. You have made a fortune by prophesying. They have given you whole bricks of gold. Let us have a specimen of your art. Tell us what is to happen in this business. I suppose you know.

Apollo.—Impossible, Momus. I have neither tripod nor censers—not so much as a fountain of Castalia.

Momus.—You are afraid, are you? You think you will be found out.

Zeus.—My son, you had better do it. Don't let this caviller mock at you—as if your inspiration depended on your tackling.

Apollo.—I could make a better business of it at Delphi or Colophon, with my instruments at hand. I will try, however, if you wish. You must allow for irregularities in the verse.

Momus.—Never mind the verse, old fellow—only speak intelligibly. No rams and tortoises are being boiled in Lydia to catch you. You know what we want to learn.

Zeus.—What is coming? The spirit works in him. My child! oh, my child! His colour changes! His eyes roll! He is convulsed! Most mysterious, most fearful!

Apollo (*in the prophetic trance*).—

List, oh list to my words, the words of the Augur Apollo,
How the dread strife shall have end which has now commenced among mortals,
Mortals with voices shrill, and armed with the weapons of logic.
Many a blow shall be struck as the foemen close in the battle;
Many a blow shall be dealt in the solid wood of the plough-tail.

But when the locust is caught in the mighty gripe of the vulture,
Then shall be heard the last croak of the ominous wet-boding raven.
Then shall the mule be strong and the jackass shall butt at his offspring.

Zeus.—Why do you laugh, Momus? It is no laughing matter. Stop, you sinner; you will choke yourself.

Momus.—What can I do but laugh at so simple a prophet?

Zeus.—If you understand the oracle, tell us what it means.

Momus.—What the oracle means! Why, it means that the prophet is a humbug, and that we who believe in him are mules and asses, without the wit of a grasshopper.

Hercules.—I am not quite at home up here—but I don't like to say nothing. What I think is this. Let the philosophers meet and argue. If Timocles has the best of it, well and good—nothing more need be done. If Timocles is beaten I will pull down the hall on Damis's head, and make an end of the miserable creature.

Momus.—Hercules, dear Hercules, most rustic of Bœotians! To punish one bad man you will destroy a thousand, and the hall besides, with the frescoes of Miltiades and Marathon. What is to become of the orators when the fountain of their illustrations is gone? Besides, you can't do it. When you were a man you perhaps might, for you did not understand the conditions of things. Now that you are a God you are aware, are you not, that these matters are pre-arranged by the Fates?

Hercules (*to Zeus*).—Is this true, sir? when I killed the Lion and the Hydra, was it the Fates that killed them, and not I?

Zeus.—Not a doubt of it.

Hercules.—And if any one is impudent to me, or robs my temples, I may not punch his head unless the Fates please?

Zeus.—Indeed, you must not.

Hercules.—With your permission then, Zeus, I will make an observation. I am a plain man, and call a spade a spade, as the poet says. If this is to be a god, may you long enjoy your blessed condition. For myself, I will go to Hades with my bow and hunt the ghosts of the monsters which I slew when I was alive.

Zeus.—Out of our own mouths we stand convicted. We may spare Damis the trouble. [But who comes here in such a hurry?]

Enter HERMAGENES.

This bronze youth with his hair in the style of the last century. It is your brother, Hermes. Your brother that stands in the Agora, next the Pœkile. He is covered with pitch. The statuaries have been moulding upon him. What brings you here, my son? Is anything wrong?

Hermagenes.—Indeed there is, Zeus, wrong with a vengeance.

Zeus.—What is it? a revolution in Athens? We ought to have been informed of it.

Hermagenes.—The founders' men were with me. 'Twas but now
They smeared me round with resin, back and brow;
Thick coated was I, and the rind or peel
Bore my correct impression like a seal.
Just then a crowd came by, and in the midst
Two pale, loud-screaming, wordy pugilists,
Damis and——

Zeus.—Not another word of your tragedy, my dear Hermagenes; I know the men. Has the fight begun?

Hermagenes.—Not yet in earnest. They are skirmishing, pelting each other with words at a distance.

Zeus.—We will go down and hear. Draw the bolts! pull up the cloud curtains! open the gates of Heaven! Hercules! what a multitude! Timocles looks ill: he shakes; he is no match for Damis, I fear. We can help him with our prayers at any rate. Softly, however, lest Damis hear.

Scene changes to the Theatre at Athens. The benches crowded with citizens. TIMOCLES *and* DAMIS *on the stage; and the* GODS, *invisible to the audience, looking on.*

Timocles.—What! you blasphemous villain, you! you don't believe in the Gods and in Providence?

Damis.—I see no proof of their existence. I wait your reasons why I should have a positive opinion about it.

Timocles.—I will give you no reasons, you wretch. Give me yours for your atheism.

Zeus.—Our man is doing well. He has the rudest manner and the loudest voice. Well done, Timocles! give him hard words. That is your strong point. Begin to reason and you will be as dumb as a fish.

Timocles.—By Athene, you shall have no reasons from me.

Damis.—Very well, then; ask me questions and I will answer them. Don't use foul language if you can help it.

Timocles.—Speak, then, you accursed monster. Do you or do you not believe in Divine Providence?

Damis.—I do not.

Timocles.—What? Do you mean that the Gods do not foresee future events?

Damis.—I do not know that they do.

Timocles.—And there is no divine order in the universe?

Damis.—None that I am aware of.

Timocles.—And the world is not governed by reason and intelligence?

Damis.—I do not perceive that it is.

Timocles.—Will you bear this, good people? Will you not stone the blasphemer?

Damis.—Why inflame the people against me, Timocles? The Gods show no displeasure. They have heard me (if hear they do) without interposing. Why should you be so fierce in their behalf?

Timocles.—They hear you. They hear you. They will give it to you by-and-bye.

Damis.—They will not have much leisure to bestow on me if they are so busy as you say, Timocles, managing the universe. They have not punished you for certain perjuries that I have heard of. I will not go into particulars, but they could scarcely have a better opportunity of vindicating their existence than by bringing you to question. They are away across the ocean, perhaps, among the Æthiopians. They dine there frequently on their own invitation, do they not?

Timocles.—What reply can I make to such horrible irreverence?

Damis.—You can give me the reply for which I have been so long waiting. You can tell me why you yourself believe in Providence.

Timocles.—I believe in it first on account of the order which is visible throughout the universal scheme of things. The sun and moon move in their allotted path; the seasons revolve; the plants spring; the animals come to the birth, and are organised with exquisite skill. Man, yet more wonderful than they, thinks and acts and makes shoes and builds houses —all evident proofs of design and purpose.

Damis.—You beg the question, Timocles. You have not proved that things are as they are by design. What is, is.

That it has been so ordered by Providence is no sure conclusion. Once there may have been disorder where there is now order. You look at the universe as it exists, you examine the movements of it, you admire them, you assume that those movements were intended, and you fly into a passion with those who cannot agree with you; but passion is not argument, as they say in the play. What is the second reason for your belief?

Timocles.—There is no need of a second; but you shall have no excuse for your impiety. You allow that Homer is the first of poets?

Damis.—I do.

Timocles.—Well, then, Homer says that there is a Providence, and I believe Homer.

Damis.—My excellent friend, Homer may be a first-rate poet, but neither he nor any of his kind are authorities on matters of fact. The object of poetry is to amuse, not to instruct. Poets arrange their words in metre, they invent legends out of their imagination, they desire to give their hearers pleasure, and that is all. But to what passages in Homer do you refer? He tells us, if I remember, that the wife and brothers and daughter of Jupiter conspired to dethrone and imprison him, and that if Thetis had not called in the help of Briareus they would have succeeded. He tells us that Jupiter, to reward Thetis, cheated Agamemnon with a false dream, and that tens of thousands of Achæans perished in consequence. Or you believe, perhaps, because Athene set on Diomed to wound Aphrodite and Ares, because the whole celestial company fell afterwards into fighting one with another; then Ares, who I suppose had not recovered from his hurt, was thrashed by Athene, and

> Up against Leto arose the doughty champion Hermes.

Or you have been convinced by the story about Artemis. Ar-

temis was angry because Œneus had not asked her to dinner, and sent a monstrous boar to ravage the country. These, I presume, are the illustrations of divine power mentioned by Homer which you have found so satisfactory.

[*Applause from all parts of the Theatre.*

Zeus.—Bless me, how they cheer; and our fellow is looking over his shoulder. . . . He trembles. He will drop his shield in a moment, and run.

Timocles.—Euripides brings the Gods upon the very stage. He shows them in the act of rewarding the good heroes, and punishing wretches like you. Is Euripides mistaken too?

Damis.—Most wise philosopher, if you argue from the stage, why then the actors Polus, Aristodemus, Satyrus must be Gods; or perhaps it is their masks, and boots, and shawls, and gloves, and false stomachs? When Euripides speaks his own opinion, he says:

> Thou see'st the æther, stretching infinite,
> Enveloping the earth in moist embrace,
> This—this is Zeus—this is the Deity.

And again:

> Zeus be Zeus whate'er he may,
> I know but what the legends say,

with more to the same purpose.

Timocles.—Then the multitudes of men and nations who have believed in the existence of the Gods, and have worshipped them, have all been deceived?

Damis.—Thank you for reminding me of national religious customs. Nothing exhibits more plainly the foundations on which theology is built. There is one religion on one side of a border, and another on the other. The Scythian worships Acinaces, the Thracian a slave, Zalmoxis, who escaped from

Samos. The Phrygian adores the moon or the month; the Æthiopian the day. The Cyllenian prays to Phanes; the Assyrian to a dove; the Persians to fire; the Ægyptians to water. At Memphis a bull is a God; at Pelusium an onion. Elsewhere in Egypt they worship an ibis, a crocodile, a cat, a monkey, a dog-headed ape. In some villages the right shoulder is sacred, in others the left; in others a skull cut in half; in others a bowl or a plate. Do you really mean, Timocles, that such things are a serious proof that the Gods exist?

Momus (to the Gods).—I warned you, my friends, that there would be an inquiry into these matters, and that the truth would come out.

Zeus.—You did so, and you were right, Momus. If we survive our present trouble I will try to mend them.

Timocles.—Oh, thou enemy of God! what dost thou say to oracles and prophecies? Whence come they, save from divine foreknowledge.

Damis.—To what oracles do you refer? You mean, I presume, the answer that Crœsus got from the Pythoness, for which he paid so dearly, that ruined him and his city. An oracle with a double face, like the statues of Hermes.

Momus.—Exactly what I most feared. Where is our soothsayer? Go in, Apollo, and answer for yourself.

Zeus.—'Sdeath, Momus, this is no time for irony.

Timocles.—Seest thou not, thou sinner thou, that thy arguments will make an end of Church and Altar?

Damis.—Not all Churches and not all Altars, Timocles. We will let the Altars stand where they burn only incense. Of the Shrine of our Lady in Tauris I would not leave a stone.

Zeus.—Frightful. The fellow spares none of us. He speaks as if from the back of a waggon, and curses you all in a heap, alike the guilty and guiltless.

Momus.—Not many of us can plead not guilty, Zeus. Wait; he will strike higher presently. (*A thunderstorm.*)

Timocles.—Dost thou hear, thou impious Damis? Dost thou hear the voice of Zeus himself?

Damis.—I hear the thunder; but whether it be the voice of Zeus you know better than I. You have been in Heaven, I presume, and have seen him. Travellers from Crete tell me they show his grave in that island. If he has been long dead, I do not perceive how he can be thundering.

Momus.—I knew he would say that; I was sure of it. You change colour, Zeus. Your teeth chatter. Pluck up your spirits. Never mind what these monkeys say.

Zeus.—Never mind! It is very well to say never mind. Don't you see that Damis has the whole Hall with him?

Momus.—Let down that gold chain of yours, and
Drag them all up in the air with earth and ocean together.

Timocles.—Have you ever been at sea, miserable man?

Damis.—Many times, Timocles.

Timocles.—And did not the wind in the sails help you more than the rowers? And was there not a pilot at the helm to keep the vessel true upon its course?

Damis.—Assuredly.

Timocles.—The ship could not reach its port without a pilot; and the ship of the Universe, you think, requires neither captain nor helmsman?

Zeus.—Well put, Timocles. A good illustration that.

Damis.—Most inspired Timocles, the captain you speak of arranges his plans beforehand. He settles his course and adheres to it. His men are all in order and obey his word of command. Spars, ropes, chains, oars are on board in their places, and ready to his hand. But the great captain of the Universe shows none of this forethought. The forestay is made fast to the stern, and the sheets to the bow. The

anchors are sometimes of gold, and the bulwarks of lead. The bottom is painted and carved: the upper works are plain and unsightly. The crew are disposed at random; the craven fool is a commissioned officer; the swimmer is sent aloft to man the yards; the skilled navigator to work at the pumps. As to the passengers—knaves sit at the captain's table; honest men are huddled into corners. Socrates and Aristides and Phocion lie on the bare boards, without room to stretch their feet, and without food enough to eat. Callias and Midas and Sardanapalus revel in luxury, and look down on the rest of mankind. This is the state of your ship, Timocles, and it explains the number of shipwrecks. Had there been a captain in command, he would have distinguished the good from the bad, have promoted worth and capacity, and have set vice and folly in the place belonging to it. The able seaman would be master or lieutenant; the skulker and poltroon would be tied to the triangles. In short, my friend, if your ship has had a commander, he has not been fit for his place, and there is need of a revolution.

Momus.—Damis is sailing with wind and stream direct into victory.

Zeus.—It is so indeed. Timocles produces nothing but common-places, and one after another they are overturned.

Timocles.—As the example of the ship does not convince you, I will give you one more argument, the last, the best, the sheet-anchor of theology.

Zeus.—What is he going to say?

Timocles.—Attend to the positions as they follow one from the other, and discover a flaw if you can. If there are altars, then there must be Gods. But there are altars, therefore there are Gods. There, what say you now? Laughing? What is there to amuse you?

Damis.—My dear friend, I doubt if this sheet-anchor of

yours will stand. You hang the existence of the Gods on the existence of altars, and you fancy the link will hold; but if this is your last position, we may as well close the discussion.

Timocles.—You admit that you are vanquished.

Damis.—Of course; you have taken refuge at the altar as men do in extremities. On that altar and in the name of your sheet-anchor we will swear a truce, and contend no more.

Timocles.—Oh! oh! you are sarcastic, are you! you grave-digger! you wretch! you abomination! you gaol bird! you cess-pool! we know where you came from; your mother was a whore; and you killed your brother and seduced your friend's wife; you are an adulterer, a sodomite, a glutton, and a beast. Stay till I can thrash you. Stay, I say, villain, abhorred villain!

Zeus.—One has gone off laughing, and the other follows railing and throwing tiles at him. Well, what are we to do?

Hermes.—The old play says, you are not hurt if you don't acknowledge it. Suppose a few people have gone away believing in Damis, what then? A great many more believe the reverse; and the whole mass of uneducated Greeks and the barbarians everywhere.

Zeus.—True, Hermes, but that was a good thing which Darius said about Zopyrus. 'I had rather have one Zopyrus than a thousand Babylons.'

DIVUS CÆSAR.

THE 'Pharsalia' of Lucan is a passionate imprecation on the destroyers of the Roman Constitution. The Gods had permitted that in this world the enemies of liberty should triumph. Struggling for consolation, the young patriot persuades himself that perhaps in another world the balance may be redressed. With the aid of the witch Erictho, he reanimates the corpse of a lately killed soldier. The livid lips describe the forging in hell of the adamantine chains which are to bind Cæsar to the crags of an infernal Caucasus. The poet bids the champions of the Republic make haste to die, that in Tartarus they may trample under foot the tyrants whom Rome was adoring as divinities. At other moments the future seems as hopeless to him as the present. He flings the guilt upon the Olympians themselves, and finds no comfort save in the hope that they may suffer retribution at the hands of the common usurpers. The Gods had forgotten to be just, and their power

would be taken from them. The civil carnage would raise mortals to the throne of heaven, their hands armed with lightnings and their brows crowned with stars.

As his last and practical conviction, Lucan seems to have concluded that from Gods of any kind no redress was to be looked for.

Victrix causa Deis placuit sed victa Catoni.

Justice was in man, or it was nowhere. If crime was to be avenged, it must be on earth and by a human hand. He sacrificed his life, while only in his 28th year, in an abortive conspiracy against Nero, and along with his life the extraordinary gifts which his frenzied passion could not wholly spoil.

Throughout his poem a confidence that the right cause ought to triumph struggles with a misgiving that, in the administration of the universe, no moral purpose is discoverable. Perhaps it was in irony, perhaps it was in a sad conviction that the Gods—if Gods there were—were no better than Nero, that he addressed the emperor in the amazing lines with which he opens his subject.

After describing the desolation which Cæsar's wars had spread over the Roman world, he proceeds:

But if no other means the fates could find
To give us Nero—if the Thunderer's self

Could reign but when the Giant's wars were done ;
We then, oh Gods, complain not. For such boon
Our trampled laws, our violated rights,
Woe, sacrilege, crime, we gladly bear them all.
Strew thy dread plains, Pharsalia, with the slain.
Spirits of fallen Carthage, sate your thirst
With Latin blood on Munda's fatal field.
Famish Perusium, perish Mutina,
Fleets drift to wreck on Leucas' iron crags,
And battles rage 'neath Ætna's blazing crest.
Yet Rome is still a debtor to the Gods
When she has thee. To thee, when late thou goest,
Thine earthly sojourn ended, to the stars,
The Heavenly palaces will fling wide their gates,
The Gods will lay their sceptres at thy feet
And bid thee choose among them. Wilt thou reign
Monarch supreme ? Wilt thou prefer to guide
The car of Phœbus ? Earth will know no fears
From change of lords beneath thy sure command ;
And each divinity to thine must yield.
This only grant, that when the choice is made,
And thou art fixed in thy august dominion,
Seek not a throne within the icy North,
Incline not to the low-sunk Southern sky,
From whence on Rome thy beams askance may fall.
Too near the Poles thy overmastering weight
Will strain the nice poised balance of the world.
Dwell in the Zenith, where each rival light
Shall pale in thine and thou shalt shine alone.
Then shall the mists melt from the face of Heaven,
The sword fall blunted from the warrior's hand,
And peace shall reign and Janus' gates be closed.
Me now inspire, in this my enterprise.
With thee within my breast I shall not need
To sue the Pythian God for mystic fire ;
In thee alone a Roman bard will find
Fit aid at need to sing a Roman song.

Many explanations may be given of this extraordinary language, yet no one of them is wholly satisfactory. When the deification of Claudius was voted

by the Senate, Lucan's uncle, Seneca, had written a farce on the occasion, the ἀποκολοκύντωσις, or translation of the late emperor into the society of pumpkins. Lucan's lines may be conceived to have been written in a similar spirit of mockery. Claudius, however, was dead when he was turned into ridicule. Nero was alive, and was not a person with whom it was safe to take liberties. Call it adulation! But adulation of the Cæsars was the last quality to be expected in the 'Pharsalia' or its author. Let it have been conventionality; but there will remain to be explained the popular sentiment to which conventional language is necessarily addressed. How could educated Romans, who were still punctilious in observing the traditionary forms of the established religion, either utter or tolerate language which appeared like a satire upon religion itself? The elevation of illustrious mortals, when their earthly labours were over, to a throne among the stars had been for ages a familiar conception. The Twins glittered in the Zodiac among the August Twelve. Hercules, Perseus, and Orion displayed in the nightly sky the rewards prepared in heaven for the deeds which they had accomplished as men. Quirinus, the mythic founder of Rome, remained the tutelary guardian of the Roman people. The spirits of heroic warriors,

reincorporated in jewelled constellations, spread over the surface of the entire celestial sphere. That the great dead should have a home among the Gods was a natural and reasonable expectation. But never till the days of the Roman Empire had men been found to say of a man like themselves, still living among them, still subjected to the conditions of mortality, 'He is but waiting till he passes from the earth for the Gods to abdicate and leave the choice to him of the vacant thrones in heaven.'

For Nero it must be said that he was but accepting honours which had been already claimed by Caius Caligula, and which had been offered by the Senate to the least arrogant of his predecessors; for Lucan, again, was but repeating a note which had been struck already by a poet of an incomparably higher order. Augustus was studiously simple—careful to conceal the power which he really possessed behind constitutional forms, and sternly contemptuous of idle flattery. Horace, of all men of intellect that ever lived, was the least likely to condescend to extravagant and unmeaning compliments. Horace was not religious, but he never mocked at religion. Long indifferent to such considerations, he tells us, half seriously, that late in life he had been frightened back into belief. In the grandest of his odes, he refers the miseries of

Rome to forgetfulness of the Gods, and he warns his countrymen that the sins of their fathers will continue to be visited upon them till they rebuild the temples and restore the fallen shrines. Yet Horace could address Augustus, with whom he was personally intimate, and with whom he continually dined, in language not less extravagant than Lucan's. Whichever of the Gods Augustus might be, whether Apollo, or Mercury, or Mars, Horace affected to believe that he was at least one of them. In pity for the wretchedness of his children, the Great Father had sent an immortal as 'a present God' to take charge of them, and to bring back the golden age. Under the beneficent rule of Augustus, the cow did not cast her calf, the corn waved yellow over the fields, the ship sped to its port with calm seas and favouring airs, man no longer broke his faith to man, and wives were chaste, and punishment followed sin or crime. To Augustus the grateful husbandman offered his evening sacrifice after his day of toil before he retired with his family to sleep.[1] What the Virgin Mary is to the modern

[1] Condit quisque diem collibus in suis
Et vitem viduas ducit ad arbores,
Hinc ad vina redit lætus et alteris
Te mensis adhibet Deum.

peasant of France or Italy, such Augustus was, while still living, in the farm-houses of Latium and Etruria —as real, perhaps more real, because he was '*præsens Divus*,' because his rule was regarded as a 'kingdom of God upon earth.'

Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, which was read by Constantine's order at the Council of Nice as an evangelical prophecy, is no more than a beautiful repetition of the same idea. In the year of Pollio's consulship 'unto Rome a child was born, unto Rome a son was given,' who was to reign as a God upon earth. In his time the earth would bring forth abundantly. In his time the lion would lie down with the lamb, the infant would play on the cockatrice's den and take no harm, and sin and sorrow would fly away. The babe for whom this brilliant horoscope was drawn was probably one of Augustus's grandsons, who died in early youth. We need not look, at any rate, beyond the imperial family to understand and even sympathise with language which was the expression of a universal feeling.

Te multâ prece, te prosequitur mero
Defuso pateris et Laribus tuum
Miscet numen, uti Græcia Castoris
Et magni memor Herculis.
Horace, *Odes :* Lib. iv., Ode 5.

To a Roman who had witnessed what Italian society had become in the last days of the Republic—the incredible depravity of manners, the corruption of justice, the oppression of the provinces, the collapse of the political fabric in a succession of civil wars which had overflowed the Roman world like a sea of lava—the reign of Augustus, protracted as it was through half a century, with order restored, and life and property secure, and peace such as the earth had never known established throughout civilised mankind, may well have seemed a kingdom of heaven; and Augustus himself, from whom these real blessings appeared to flow, may have been mistaken without extravagant credulity for something more than a mere mortal.

But let us turn to what we actually know of the introduction of this singular idolatry.

The Romans, like all great peoples, were, in the earlier stages of their history, eminently religious. Their habits were frugal, their private lives were austerely moral, and wherever conduct is pure, piety springs up by an unvarying law of nature, as grass and flowers grow from a wholesome soil. Reverence for God, or the Gods, was interwoven with domestic habits and with public laws. The fact of the Gods' existence and of their sovereign rule over all things

was accepted with the faith which had never heard of scepticism. The simple rites which the early Latins were called on to observe neither troubled their consciences nor perplexed their understandings. The whole duty of man lay in *virtus*—virtue, manliness; and unbelief is an infection which manly minds are the last to catch.

But they could not escape the inevitable. The Gods of Latium might perhaps be supreme in Italy; but when the authority of the republic was extended beyond the Peninsula, the conquerors encountered other nations with other creeds, and it fared with the Romans as it fared with the Israelites among the Semitic tribes of Canaan:

> Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes
> Intulit agresti Latio.

The Israelites identified Jehovah with Baal. The Greeks taught the Latins to see in their own Jupiter and Minerva and Venus, the Zeus and Pallas and Aphrodite of Homer and Hesiod. With the new names came the impure mythology of the Hellenes; and the Latin morality, which was founded in religion, dissolved and disappeared in the presence of Deities whom it was no longer possible to respect. The cultivated Athenians could resolve their legends into allegory. The practical Romans took the letter

of the mythology as they found it, and discovered that it was no longer credible. Those beings could not be Gods in any true or real sense who lived in the practice of the worst vices which their ancestors had taught them to abhor. The public ceremonial survived, but the heart had gone out of it. The fear of God departed, and morality and justice departed with it; and the ancient Latin creed underwent the fate to which all religions are condemned which are connected with partial sympathies or have risen out of imperfect knowledge.

Religions which have exerted a real influence over masses of mankind have always begun in genuine conviction. They have contained an answer to questions which men were anxiously asking at the time when they originated, and to which they appeared to give a credible reply. Once accepted, they petrify into unchanging forms. Knowledge increases; religion remains stationary. Fresh problems rise, for which they provide no solution, or a solution transparently false; and then follow the familiar phenomena of disintegration and failing sanctions and relaxed rule of action, and, along with these, the efforts of well-meaning men to resist the irresistible —reconciliations of religion and science, natural theologies reconstructed on philosophic bases, with at

intervals unavailing efforts to conceal the cracks in the theory by elaborate restorations of ritual; — or again, on the other side, the firm avowal of disbelief from the more sincere and resolute minds, such as rings out of the lines of Lucretius.

With Lucretius we are all familiar: not less interesting — perhaps more interesting, as showing the working of more commonplace intellects — is the treatise 'On the Nature of Gods,' which Cicero wrote almost at the same time when Lucretius was composing his poem, and which contains the opinions of the better sort of educated Romans.

That such a dialogue should have been written by a responsible and respectable person in Cicero's position, is itself a proof that religion was at its last gasp. Tradition had utterly broken down: serious men were looking in the face the facts of their situation, and were asking from experience what rule they were living under; and experience gave, and always must give, but one reply. Men are taught to believe in an overruling Providence; they look for evidence of it, and they find that, so far as human power extends over nature there are traces of a moral government; but that it is such a government as man himself establishes for the protection of society, and nothing more. To what we call good and evil, nature

as such is indifferent, and nature submits to man's control, not as he is just or unjust, believing or sceptical, but as he understands the laws by which the operations of nature are directed. The piety of the captain does not save his ship from the reefs. He depends on his knowledge of navigation. Prayer does not avert the pestilence; but an understanding of the conditions of health. The lightning strikes the church, but spares the gambling-house provided with a conducting-rod. Disease and misfortune, or the more mighty visitations of the earthquake, the famine, the inundation, make no distinction between the deserving and the base. The house falls and spares the fool, while it cuts short a career which might have been precious to all mankind. This is the truth so far as experience can teach; and only timidity, or ignorance, or a resolution, like that of Job's friends, to be more just than God, can venture to deny it; and thus arises the dismayed exclamation which has burst in all ages from the hearts of noble-minded men: Why are the wicked in such prosperity? Not that they envy the wicked any miserable enjoyment which they may obtain for themselves, but because they see that all things come alike to all, and that there is no difference—that as it is with the wise man, so it is with the fool; as with him that

sacrifices, so with him that sacrifices not. The manifest disregard of moral distinctions discredits their confidence in Providence, and sends a shuddering misgiving through them, that no such power as a moral Providence exists anywhere beyond themselves.

Again and again in the progress of human development mankind have been forced into an unwilling recognition of the truth, and the crisis has been always a painful one. So long as religion is fully believed, the inattention of nature to impiety and immorality is compensated by the increased energy of government, and by the higher aspirations of individual men. Impiety does not escape unpunished when it is treated by the magistrate as a crime. In a society which is penetrated by a consciousness of responsibility to God morality is rewarded as such, and vice and impurity are punished as such by temporal inconveniences. When religion no longer guides the intellect or controls the conduct, society confines itself to the punishment of offences against itself. Having no longer any high consciousness of duty, society is tolerant of profligacy which avoids the grosser forms of crime. For the rest, the magistrate exclaims cynically: *Deorum injuriæ Diis curæ,* well knowing that if the Gods' injuries are not

punished by himself the offender's slumbers will be undisturbed.

So matters stood at Rome when Velleius the Epicurean, Balbus the Stoic, and Cotta the Pontifex Maximus, the Pope, the head of the national religion, the guardian of the sacred oracles, met together at Cicero's villa to discuss the nature of the Gods. The argument was opened properly by Velleius. Epicureanism was the popular creed of the day, the creed of the men of science and intellect, the creed of the poet, the artist, and the statesman. The Epicureans believed in phenomena. They held with Locke that the intellect could reason only upon facts conveyed to it through the senses, and that knowledge could not extend beyond the objects of sensible experience. The earth and all that existed upon it had been created by nature, and was governed by laws of natural causation. Nature was sovereign, and no external power could be proved to have ever interfered with it. As to the supposition that another order of beings existed somewhere superior to man, the Epicureans had no objection to acknowledge that it might be so ; they thought it rather probable than otherwise: they denied only that such beings took an interest in man.

Briefly and completely their views on this subject had been expressed by Ennius:

> Ego genus esse semper dico et dixi Cœlitum,
> Sed non eos curare opinor quid agat humanum genus.
> Nam si curent, bene bonis sit malis male, quod nunc abest.

'I always say and have said that the race of the celestials exists, but I opine not that they concern themselves with the doings of the sons of men. Did they so concern themselves, it would be well with the good and ill with the wicked, which now it is not.'

Men had no care for the animals which shared the earth with them. The Gods might exist, yet might care as little for men as men cared for beetles or butterflies. The admission of the possibility of such an existence was perhaps a condescension of philosophy to popular prejudice, or arose from a wish to avoid the reproach of Atheism. Yet Velleius insisted on it with an appearance of earnestness. He appealed to instinct and internal emotion as an evidence[1] that somewhere in the universe were to be found beings, in a state of unbroken repose, perfect virtue, and perfect happiness, and that in the adoration of them—disinterested, because no favour was

[1] 'Anteceptam animo rei quandam informationem sine quâ nec intelligi quicquam nec disputari potest.'

to be looked for in return—was the highest felicity of man.

These views are set out in the dialogue with a brevity which shows that Cicero did not think them to deserve more elaborate treatment, and in the reply of Cotta the most interesting feature is his statement of his own position. He was the Pontifex Maximus. The duty of his office, he said, required him to defend the religion established by law. He would be pleased if the existence of the Gods could be established, not only on the authority of tradition, but as a fact which admitted of proof; but it was surrounded with difficulties which Velleius had only increased. That mankind could worship beings who were and would be always indifferent to them, was hardly to be expected. The openly expressed scepticism of bolder reasoners, the exulting claim of Lucretius that the spectre of superstition had been for ever exorcised by science, spared the necessity of graver argument.

The Epicurean being thus dismissed, the word was taken up by the Stoic Balbus. With the Epicurean, morality was enlightened self-interest. The Stoic believed in duty. To act rightly, to love justice, and truth, and purity, and to hate their opposites, were matters of absolute obligation to him

A law implied a lawgiver; responsibility required a ruler, to whom an account would have to be rendered; the Stoic therefore looked about him in a very modern fashion for answers to popular objections to the truth of religion. If the age of miracles had ceased, he found that miracles, portents, or prodigies were recorded in tradition; the instances of design in nature, the adaptation of means to ends in the structure and functions of animals, were evidence of an intelligent Creator; and the elaborate pains with which Cicero explains the Stoic position shows that at least he felt it to deserve respectful treatment. Balbus maintained the existence of the Gods to be an established truth of history. Castor and Pollux had appeared in the battle at the Lake Regillus. Sacrifices had been offered and accepted. The Decii had devoted themselves, and a victory had been won. Oracles had been delivered at Delphi and elsewhere, containing clear prophecies of future events. These events had afterwards taken place, and a foresight which was not to be accounted for by human sagacity was manifestly preternatural. In Italy again, although it had fallen lately into neglect, the art of divination had been practised from the earliest period, and too many instances could be produced of disaster from the neglect of divine injunctions so

conveyed to admit of being explained away. The sacred chickens had refused to eat in the First Punic War. The Consul Claudius had cried impatiently that they should drink then, and had flung them into the water. The Roman fleet had been lost in consequence, and Claudius had been tried for impiety and executed. In the traditions of these things fable might have been mixed with truth, but when all possible deductions had been made on the score of historic fallibility, sufficient evidence remained for an enlightened and reasonable belief.

Passing from tradition to natural philosophy, Balbus next appealed to the motion of the stars, and the regularity of the operations of nature. Posidonius, whom he called his friend, had constructed an orrery, in which the movements of the sun and moon and planets, and their relative positions throughout the year, were exactly represented. Anticipating literally Paley's illustration from the watch, Balbus asked whether, if this machine were exhibited in Scythia or Britain, the veriest savage could avoid perceiving that it was the work of a designing mind. Pursuing the same line of thought, and anticipating the Bridgewater treatises, he went in detail into the structure of plants and animals, and dwelt on the adaptation of their various organs to their method of

life. The Stoics had interrogated nature in the same spirit as modern religious philosophers, and had arrived at the same conclusion. They believed themselves to have found a proof of contrivance, and therefore of a contriving Creator. But the real difficulty remained. Nature might have an intelligent Author, yet intelligence was nothing without morality; and if the evidences of design were abundant, yet evidences of moral government were as conspicuously absent. With ingenious boldness Balbus addressed himself to the central problem, and approached as closely, perhaps, as any mere philosopher has ever done to the only possible solution of it. Morality, when vigorously alive, sees farther than intellect, and provides unconsciously for intellectual difficulties. The Latins had extended their reverence beyond the mythological divinities, and had built temples to the moral virtues as the guardian spirits of mankind. Constancy and Faith, Valour and Wisdom, Chastity and Piety, had each their separate altar, where human beings paid their orisons, and prayed for strength to overcome temptation. 'You complain,' said Balbus, 'that you can see no sign of an overruling Providence in the administration of the universe; the Virtues are Providence, and themselves constitute the moral govern-

ment which you pretend that you cannot find. Justice may not be perfect; some crimes may be left unpunished, some good actions may be unrewarded. It is so with earthly governments, and may be so with the divine. It is enough that we see a tendency which may become stronger with time, and may be carried out further in later generations.'

In the close of his argument, he returns to the auguries. It was a historical fact that from immemorial time the Etruscans had supposed that they could read coming events in the entrails of sacrificed animals. On great occasions, with the utmost solemnity, and in the presence of the highest functionaries of the state, the body of a calf or a sheep had been gravely opened, and the most important actions had been undertaken, or laid aside, according to the condition of the heart or liver of the dead animal. This was a plain matter of certainty. The experiment would not have been repeated for so long a time if the events had not corresponded to the indications so obtained. Even Tacitus, a century and a half later, could speak of these foreshadowings as still fully credited, and as apparently established by evidence. Balbus, however, was content with the fact, and laid little stress upon it. He did not pro-

fess to regard the blackened liver of a calf as caused by divine interposition; he regarded it merely as a natural phenomenon rising from some internal correspondence of things.

On these reasonings, with more of which in a modern form we are all familiar, the High Priest proceeded to comment at length, and with more seriousness than he had shown in discussing the arguments of the Epicureans. He commenced with a peculiarly solemn reference to his own official position, and like Descartes, while doubting everything from the point of reason, he insisted that his private convictions remained unshaken, because they reposed on belief and authority. He was Pontifex (Pope), he repeated. He was appointed by the State to uphold the established creed and ceremonial. These he ever had maintained, and always would maintain, and no one, learned or unlearned, would succeed in shaking his faith. So far as the truth of the Roman religion was in question he should follow his predecessors in the papal chair, Coruncarius, Publius Scipio, and Scævola, and not Zeno, or Cleanthes, or Chrysippus. Caius Lælius, the augur, had more weight with him than the wisest philosophers of the porch. The ceremonial, the haruspices, and the Sibylline books were the pillars of the Roman Commonwealth. The

foundations of it had been laid in religion by Romulus and Numa, and by the immortal Gods alone it was sustained. That was his position as Pontifex.

'You philosophers, however,' Cotta went on, 'appeal to reason. I myself believe without reason, *etiam nullâ ratione redditâ*. The authority of my ancestors is sufficient for me. But you reject authority, and you will have reason only. I must therefore set my reason against yours, and I tell you that you with your arguments make doubtful what without argument is not doubtful at all. Your appearance of Castor and Pollux at the Lake Regillus may be but a legend. It is unauthenticated by certain history. The Decii were probably only brave men who threw themselves among the enemy, knowing that their countrymen would follow. And what a character are you not attributing to the Gods when you represent them as beings whose favour must be purchased by the sacrifice of good men! You describe the Gods as all-perfect, and omniscient, and you suppose them to exist under conditions where no quality which we call good can possibly be found. Where there is no evil there can be no preference of good to evil. Where all is already known, there can be no active intelligence. Where wrong-doing is impossible, there is no justice; no temperance

where there is no temptation; no valour where there is no evil to be overcome. The theogonies of Hesiod and Homer are too childish for belief, and when all is said, there remains the enigma, which you have not resolved: if the Gods exist, and if the world is ruled by them, why is it well with the wicked? and why do the good fall into calamity? The commonwealth and the family are ill ordered when virtue is not rewarded, and crime is not punished: so far as we can trace the action of the Gods no such distinction is made. Argue as you will, this is the fact. In the distribution of good and evil, so far as it is left to forces external to man, no question is asked about character. You say that we ought not to be surprised if the Gods do not punish every crime, because earthly governments do not. Where is the analogy? Earthly governments fail for want of knowledge. You leave no such excuse for the Gods, for the Gods are assumed to be omniscient. You say that though the wicked man may himself escape, his crimes may be visited on his children. Wonderful justice! What should we say of a commonwealth where the law condemned the son or grandson for the sins of his father? In the system of nature there is no rule of a just God discernible. One event comes alike to all. Men, cities, nations, perish undeserv-

edly, because, forsooth, God cannot attend to everything. And yet you expect us to pray to Him! It cannot be.

So far in substance the Pontiff Cotta; and with Cotta's scepticism the dialogue ends. A fourth speaker, especially if he could have had the light of later history to guide him, might have shown Cotta that his own foundations were as feeble as those which he overthrew. We, too, have heard of faith which rests upon authority, and dispenses with reason; but what does authority rest upon? Such a faith may prolong a sickly existence for one or more generations, but it cannot endure the buffets of practical life. Questions to which it can give no reasonable answer hang multiplying like barbed arrows in its side. The ceremonial becomes stereotyped. The faith resolves itself into words repeated without conviction. Packthread might as easily hold a giant gone insane, as arguments for the probable truth of the Pagan religion hold in check the wolfish appetites of unbelieving mankind. In Cicero's time the once God-fearing Latins had become a commonwealth of Atheists, in which chastity and innocence blushed to show themselves, and corruption had lost the consciousness of its own deformity. Three conquered continents lay at the feet of the Republic. The olig-

archy and the democracy were snarling and fighting over their prey. Italy was torn with civil wars, and decimated by proscriptions. Ordered freedom was lost in anarchy, and the state was staggering in drunken frenzy. The senators sold justice, and great ladies sold their persons, to the highest bidder. The provinces were stripped to the bone by the prætors. The prætors spent their spoils in gluttony and bestiality. As to religion, and the respect which authority could command for it, Cotta's successor in the Pontificate was young Cæsar, notorious then for the dissoluteness of his habits, and for an intellect which for many years he appeared to disdain to use. For the constitution, it had fallen into such extraordinary contempt, that Catiline, with a small knot of fashionable young men, had proposed to burn the city and kill the consuls and half the patricians. Yet Rome was so conscious of its own worthlessness as to be almost incapable of indignation; although the plot was discovered, and Catiline knew that it was discovered, he could venture to attend the Senate House, and sit and listen while the particulars of it were detailed by Cicero. He could walk out unmolested, continue his preparations at leisure, leave the city without an attempt at arrest, and put himself at the head of an open insurrection.

To this it had come in the first capital of the world, and the most advanced nation of it, because, in the Hebrew language, they had forgotten God. They had no belief remaining in any divine rule over them. The cement was gone which held society together, and the entire fabric of it had fallen in shapeless ruin. Some vast change was inevitable, some powerful reassertion of the elementary principles of authority and justice, or the enormous Roman empire would have burst like a bubble.

In recorded history no single man (perhaps with the exception of Mahomet) has produced effects so vast and so enduring as Julius Cæsar. It is the more remarkable that in no language, ancient or modern, is there any adequate biography of him. To Lucan he was an incarnation of Satan. Suetonius, the fullest authority on his early life, accepted and recorded every scandalous libel which was current in patrician coteries. To Suetonius the loose songs of the Roman soldiers were sufficient evidence to charge Cæsar with infamy. With as much reason similar accusations might be brought against Nelson or Collingwood, because, in loose affectionate talk, they were freely spoken of in the English fleet under the name which Johnson defines as a term of endearment among sailors. To Cicero Cæsar appeared at first

as a young man of genius and fashion, who was wasting time and talents, while he was himself improving both. As the talents showed themselves more unmistakably, and Cicero was obliged to allow that Cæsar's powers as an orator, when he cared to use them, were as great as his own, that his style as a writer was unmatched, that his influence almost without effort was growing, and, worse still, when it appeared that he was the advocate of the democracy contempt and pity changed to fear and suspicion. And as Cæsar at last towered up above both him and all his contemporaries, Cicero came to dread and hate him, and sate approving in the Senate when he was murdered. Thus from Cicero, except in scattered glimpses, we gather no credible picture, and we are driven back to Cæsar himself, who in his 'Commentaries' has left the most lucid of all military narratives; but, except in the studied absence of self-glorification, and in a few sentences in which for a moment he allows us to see into his own inner nature, he leaves us scarcely better provided with the means of understanding him. Patrician constitutionalists, judging as men do by the event, were assured that he had early conceived an intention of overthrowing the republic; and that his object in obtaining his command in Gaul was merely to secure the support

of an army to bring about his country's ruin. Nothing can be less likely. A conspirator would never have chosen so circuitous a road, or one so little tending, according to common laws of probability, to lead to his object. He was past forty before he began to show what was in him. May it not have been rather that he remained in Rome, hoping that some useful career might open for him, till the steady growing anarchy and corruption taught him that nothing was to be looked for there? Life was slipping away, and he wished to accomplish something memorable before he died. The Germans were pouring in over the Rhine. But for Cæsar Ariovistus might have been an Alaric, and Europe might have been Teutonized four centuries before its time. In ten years Cæsar had forced back the Germans into their forests. He had invaded Britain. Gaul he had not merely overrun with his armies and coerced into submission, but he had won the affection of the people whom he had subdued. The Gauls became an integral part of the Roman nation, and infused new vitality into the brain and sinew of the empire. For such a service the reward which the Roman aristocracy considered him to deserve was degradation, dishonour, and afterwards, of course, death. The common sense of mankind repudiated the enormous injustice. His adoring

legions, instead of demanding pay to remain on his side, contributed out of their own purses the expenses of the wars which followed. The aristocracy died hard. The flower of them fell at Pharsalia. With the degrading support of the Numidian chiefs, they fought through a fresh campaign in Africa. When Cato had fallen on his sword at Utica, the scattered fragments of Pompey's and Scipio's armies drifted into Spain, and threw their last stake in a desperate struggle upon the Ebro. Then it was over. The Republican constitution of Rome had fallen, destroyed by its own vices. Cæsar was sole sovereign of the civilised world; and so effectively the work was accomplished that his own death could not undo it. Order and authority were re-established under a military empire, and the Roman dominion which had been on the edge of dissolution, received a new lease of existence. Was it to be wondered at if men said that the doer of such an exploit was something more than man? Cæsar had found the world going to pieces in madness and corruption. All that mankind had gained from the beginning of recorded time, all that Greece had bequeathed of art and culture, all the fruits of the long struggles of Rome to coerce unwilling barbarians into obedience to law, was on the brink of perishing. The human race might have fallen back into primeval

savagery. Cæsar, by his own resolute will, had taken anarchy by the throat and destroyed it. Quirinus, the first founder of Rome, was called a God. Was there not here a greater than Quirinus? Philosophers had cried despairingly that the Gods (if Gods existed) had no care for man. Had not a living God come among them in the form of man? Was not Cæsar a God?

There is a doubt whether Cæsar himself, in his own lifetime, permitted the indulgence of these fancies. Probably not. So calm, so rational an intellect was not so easily intoxicated, nor was it like him to encourage, for political reasons, any lying exaggerations. Suetonius says that he allowed honours to be paid to him—*ampliora humano fastigio* —that temples were raised to him, with sacrificing priests, and his own image above the altars. Tacitus, a far better authority, says that Nero was the first of the Cæsars who was officially recognised as a God before his death, 'the Emperors not hitherto receiving this distinction until their sojourn upon earth was ended.'[1] So far as can be seen, Cæsar had personally no religious convictions whatever. He had no belief in a future life. He considered death to be the limit

[1] 'Nam Deûm honor Principi non ante habetur quam agere inter homines desierit.'—Tacitus' '*Annals*,' lib. xv., cap. 74.

of human existence, and on existence in the present life he set but little value. When warned of the conspiracy to kill him, he refused to take precautions. He had lived long enough, and did not care to continue. Whatever, however, might have been his own thoughts upon the subject, the popular feeling was not to be restrained. He was enrolled among the twelve Gods. The month of July, which still bears his name, was allotted to him in the Fasti. His successor was but carrying out the universal wishes of the army and the people when he built a temple to him and instituted a formal service there. At the time of his consecration a brilliant and unfamiliar star was seen for several nights in the sky, and was generally regarded as the spirit of Cæsar. That he had been received up into heaven, Suetonius says, was not merely a figure of speech, but the real conviction of mankind.

Augustus, who had been brought up by Cæsar, shared probably in his uncle's opinions on these subjects. Legend said that, when a young man, Augustus had made one of a famous supper party—Cœna Δωδεκάθεος—'supper of the twelve Gods—' where each guest had represented a God or Goddess, and Augustus had personated Apollo.

The authority was only certain *notissimi versus*—

verses well known in Rome a hundred years after. The story is out of character with Augustus, and is probably a lie.[1]

Cæsar had named him his heir, with a just insight into his extraordinary qualities. He returned the confidence which had been placed in him with a profound veneration to Cæsar's memory; and when the first confusion was over which followed Cæsar's death, when the attempt to re-establish the constitution had utterly failed, and the popular will had ratified Cæsar's disposition and raised him to the throne, Augustus set himself with a feeling of sacred obligation to punish the murderers. In three years not one of the whole of them survived: Brutus, Cassius, Casca, all were gone—some killed, some falling by their own hands; Cicero himself, an accomplice though not an actor, not escaping, having no longer Cæsar to protect him. *Scribunt quidam*, says Suetonius, not undertaking, however, to vouch for their accuracy, that, on the Ides of March, after the fall of Perusia, three hundred selected prisoners

[1] Cum primum istorum conduxit mensa Choragum,
Sexque Deos vidit Mallia sexque Deas,
Impia dum Phœbi Cæsar mendacia ludit,
Dum nova Divorum cœnat adulteria,
Omnia se a terris tunc numina declinârunt
Fugit et auratos Jupiter ipse toros.
Suetonius, '*De Vitâ Octavii.*'

were sacrificed at an altar to Divus Julius. Augustus had no predilection for melodrama. If the story is true, it was an extraordinary illustration of the fanaticism to which he was compelled to condescend. More probably a severe example was made of the Perusians. Some passionate partisan may have said that the victims were offered to the manes of the Dictator, and a metaphor, as often happens, may have passed into a fact.

However this may be, Augustus was no sooner settled in the purple than he endeavoured to bury the recollections of the civil war in a general amnesty. Society had grown ashamed of its orgies, and returned to simpler habits of life, and the Emperor led the way in the reform. Like Charles V., Augustus banished plate from his household, and was served with the plainest food on the plainest earthenware. He slept on a truckle bed without hangings. His furniture was *vix privatæ elegantiæ*, scarcely fine enough for a private gentleman. His dress was homespun, not distinguishable from the dresses of his attendants, and to emphasize the example, was manufactured by the Empress and his daughter. With the improvement in manners there set in also one of those periodical revivals of religious sentiment with which history at such times is familiar. Augus-

tus, either from policy or because the feelings which could influence Horace had also influenced him, encouraged the symptoms of recovering piety. Like his uncle he was Pontifex Maximus; but unlike him he made his office a reality. Cæsar had defied auguries, Augustus never ventured an important act without consulting the haruspices. His name, according to Suetonius, he derived from his attention to the flight of birds—*tanquam ab avium gestis*—the birds, as inhabitants of the air, being the supposed messengers between earth and sky. If the etymology is incorrect, the suggestion of it is an evidence of the popular belief in this feature of the imperial character. He was punctilious in each and all of his religious observances. He reformed the priesthood, he revised the canon of the Sibylline books, and destroyed the apocryphal additions. He held, like Cotta, to the traditions of his fathers, looked unfavourably on heresies and new opinions, and forbade the novel forms of worship which with the turn of fashion were coming in from the East.

For himself, notwithstanding the language addressed to him by Horace, he declined, while he was alive, any public recognition of his superhuman qualities. He did not permit himself to be addressed

as Dominus or Lord.[1] No shrines or temples were erected to him in Rome, and in the provinces only in connection with the genius of the empire. On public buildings at Ephesus, he is found, from inscriptions on recently discovered buildings there, to have been described by the singular title Υἱὸς Θεοῦ, 'Son of God.' It is curious to consider that St. Paul must have seen these words there. The idea of the Sonship was already not unfamiliar. Nevertheless, notwithstanding his modesty, it is certain that throughout the Roman dominions Augustus was regarded, not only as the Son of God, but as an incarnation of God—a *præsens Divus*, a second revelation in the flesh of the reality of the celestial powers; and during his long reign the harassed peasant, who at last could till his farm and eat his bread in safety, poured libations with unhesitating faith to the divinity of the Emperor. On his death the popular belief received official ratification. In the Fasti he was placed next to Julius. The uncle and nephew became the tutelary deities of the fairest months in the year. Legends gathered about his history. He was found to have been born of a virgin. His mother had conceived him in a vision in the Temple

[1] 'Domini appellationem ut maledictum et opprobrium semper exhorruit.'

of Apollo. The place of his nativity was held sacred. No curious visitor was allowed to intrude there. No one might enter, except to pray. A still more remarkable story was believed in Rome in Suetonius' time, on the authority of Julius Marathus, which it is difficult to suppose was not in some way connected with the Gospel history. A few months before his birth a prodigy was observed, which the augurs interpreted to mean that a child was coming into the world who was to be King of Rome. The Senate passed a vote that no infant born in that year should be allowed to live.[1]

Any superstition is tolerable so long as it is sincerely believed, so long as it is a motive to moral conduct, and makes men morally better than they would have been without it. Under Augustus Cæsar the language of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue was scarcely more than a hyperbole. Society, in the last pangs of dissolution, had been restored to life, and if the Divine rule over the world be a rule of justice, the public administration under the second Cæsar must

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[1] 'Auctor est Julius Marathus ante paucos quam nasceretur menses prodigium Rome factum publice quo denuntiabatur regem populi Romani naturam parturire. Senatum exterritum censuisse ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur: eos qui gravidas uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque spem traheret, curâsse ne senatûs consultum ad ærarium deferatur.'— Suetonius, *De Vitâ Octavii*, cap. 94.

have seemed, when compared with the age which preceded it, like the return of Astræa. And again, if we look at the ulterior purposes of Providence, it was the consolidation of the empire, the establishment of peace, order, and a common government round the basin of the Mediterranean, which enabled the Apostles to carry Christianity through the world, and to organise a Catholic Church; while the chief difficulties were already removed which would have interfered with the acceptance of the Christian creed. Already the Roman world believed that a Son of God who was himself God had been born upon earth of a human mother and a Divine Father, that he had reigned as a king, that he had established his dominion over mankind, and that after his death he had gone back to Heaven, from which he had descended, there to remain for ever.

It was in no figure of speech that St. Paul spoke of the secular power as ordained of God. So far as the power was the instrument of justice, so far as it was an instrument of Providence, it was the power of God; and yet a brief trial sufficed to exhaust the divinity of the imperial purple. The general administration continued to be tolerable for centuries; but the imperial dignity tended to become hereditary; to be born to mere earthly greatness is a severe trial;

and the youth never existed who could be educated uninjured in the belief that he was more than a man. When Herod spoke, the people said it was the voice of God, and he was smitten with worms because he gave not God the glory. The younger Cæsars were smitten with the genius of wickedness, as a rebuke even more significant to the unpermitted and audacious assumption. Tiberius and Claudius were neither of them born in the purple, and however atrocious their conduct, their crimes were not traceable to their pretensions to divinity. Tiberius was a man of science and a fatalist,[1] and, amidst his enormous vices, did not pretend to powers of which he disbelieved the existence. Claudius was a miserable pedant, whom Augustus had considered unfit for any higher office than that of a chief priest (*augurale sacerdotium*), and when Claudius was made a God at his death, the universal ridicule showed that already the divinity of the Cæsars was passing into a jest. It had hardly survived Caligula. Caligula, the son of Germanicus, who, if bred as a soldier, might have been a useful centurion, being brought up a Cæsar, was the strangest figure which ever sat upon a European throne. He was a savage, and he knew

[1] Circa Deos ac religiones negligentior quippe addictus mathematicæ, persuasionisque plenus cuncta fato agi.'—Suetonius.

it. When they told him he was a God, in grotesque mockery of himself and his instructors he challenged Jupiter Capitolinus to fight, and Jupiter not responding, he took the head from his statue and replaced it with his own. He stood on the temple steps and bade the people pray to him. He appointed a chapter of priests to offer sacrifices to him, the choicest that could be found (*excogitatissimas hostias*), and either in servility or in the same spirit of wild riot, the patricians contended for the honour of admission to the extraordinary order.

The translation of Claudius 'among the pumpkins' was another step downwards; but worse was to come. Claudius had been more sinned against than sinning. Caligula had a trait of humour in him. His profanities had been expressions rather of his contempt for the baseness of the court, than of any conceit of his own greatness. It remained for Nero, the pupil of Seneca, the accomplished artist, poet, painter, sculptor, musician, public singer; the sentimentalist, who sighed when called to sign a death-warrant, and wished that he had never learned to write; who, when told that three legions had revolted, said that he would recover them to their allegiance with his tears—it was reserved for him to exhibit, as a *præsens Divus*, the most detestable quali-

ties which have been ever witnessed in combination in any human being. For Nero exhausted the list of possible enormities, leaving not one crime unperpetrated of which man is capable, and always in the most hideous of forms. To make his wickedness complete, he was without the temptation of violent appetites, which, in reducing man to a beast, give him in some degree the excuses of a beast. He was cruel, without being naturally ferocious; he was depraved, yet he had little capacity for sensual enjoyment; and, with intellect sufficient to know what was good, he chose evil from deliberate preference of it.

A famous French actress watched by death-beds in the hospitals, that she might study the art of expiring on the stage. The bolder Nero committed incest with his mother that he might realise the sensations of Œdipus, and murdered her that he might comprehend the situation of Orestes. Under Nero's fearful example the imperial court of Rome became a gilded brothel. Chastity was turned into a jest, vice was virtue, and fame lay in excess of infamy. The wisest sunk to the level of the worst. Seneca composed a vindication of the assassination of Agrippina, accusing her of having conspired against her son. The Senate decreed a thanksgiving

to the Gods for Nero's deliverance from Agrippina's treachery. The few honourable men, like Pætus Thrasea and Soranus, who refused to follow with the stream, were made away with; as if the emperor desired, in the tremendous language of Tacitus, *virtutem ipsam exscindere*—to cut out virtue itself by the roots; and with a yet stranger appropriateness than even Tacitus himself could recognise, when Nero had set Rome on fire, he selected the Christian converts as scapegoats for his guilt. He smeared them with pitch, and set them to blaze as torches in his gardens to light his midnight revels. What those revels were no modern language can decently reveal. In a torch-light festival on Agrippa's lake, the noblest ladies in Rome appeared as naked prostitutes, the emperor sailing up and down among them in his barge. Tacitus must tell the rest in his own words: *Ipse per licita atque illicita fœdatus nihil flagitii reliquerat quo corruptior ageret, nisi paucos post dies uni ex illo contaminatorum grege cui nomen Pythagoræ fuit in modum solemnium conjugiorum denupsisset. Inditum Imperatori flammeum—visi auspices—dos et genialis torus et faces nuptiales. Cuncta denique spectata quæ etiam in fœmina nox operit.* (Tacit. *Ann.* 15, 37.)

After these outrages it seems a desecration of a sacred word to speak of Nero in connection with re-

ligion; yet it was Nero's destiny in this world to fulfil the measure of perfect infamy. As he had destroyed virtue, one further step was necessary—to destroy the belief in any source of virtue. He was an artist, as was said: *Qualis artifex pereo* were his words when he was dying. He was without conscience and therefore could have no reverence. He was fearless, and had no superstition. Belief of his own he had none, save for a time in the Syrian goddess of indecency, to whom he was soon worse than faithless.[1] The Syrian Goddess being repudiated, his object of worship was afterwards a female statuette (*icuncula puellaris*). He had some notion of fate; for fate, he had a strange imagination, was to make him one day 'King of the Jews.' But Nero was his own God and maker of Gods, and belief in God became impossible when Nero was regarded as a personation of him. On medals and in public instruments he solemnly assumed the name of Jupiter. He, too, had his temples and his priests. He had murdered his wife Octavia; he afterwards kicked to death his mistress Poppæa; but while Poppæa was in favour she shared his divine honours with him,

[1] 'Religionum usque quaque contemptor, præter unius Deæ Syriæ. Hanc mox ita sprevit ut urinâ contaminaret.' — Suetonius *De Vitâ Neronis.*

and a child which she bore to him was to have been a God too, had it not unfortunately died.

To this pass the world had come in the kingdom of heaven upon earth which was to have been realised by the divinity of the Cæsars. It is startling to remember that Nero was the Cæsar to whom St. Paul appealed, that it was in the Rome of Nero that St. Paul dwelt two years in his own house, that it was in the household of Nero that he found or made converts to Christianity. The parricides, the incests, the wholesale murders, the 'abomination of desolation' in the polluted saloons of the palace, were actually witnessed by persons with whom he was in daily intercourse. St. Paul with his own eyes may have seen 'the son of perdition sitting in the temple of God, showing that he was God,' and we need go no further to look for his meaning. Yet in his Epistles written from Rome he says little of these things. Those words are perhaps his only allusion to them.

The administration of Augustus was the most perfect system of secular government ever known, and the attributes assigned to Augustus were the apotheosis of it. The principle of Augustus was the establishment of law and order, of justice and decency of conduct. Of the heroic virtues, or even the modest virtues of purity and sense of moral re-

sponsibility, such a system knew nothing, and offered no motive for moral enthusiasm. Order and law and decency are the body of society, but are a body without a soul; and, without a soul, the body, however vigorous its sinews, must die and go to corruption. Human improvement is from within outwards. A state which can endure must be composed of members who all in their way understand what duty means and endeavour to do it. Duty implies genuine belief in some sovereign spiritual power. Spiritual regeneration comes first, moral after it, political and social last. To reverse the order is to plant a flower which has been cut from its natural stem, which can bloom but for a day and die.

The ways of Providence are obscure and perplexing, but scenes such as those which Rome had witnessed under Nero are not acted on this planet in the most neglected condition of it without retribution. Nero perished miserably, and on the accursed city which had sinned with him the wrath of Heaven, or destiny, or nature, or whatever it may be called, was not long in falling. We read in the Roman historians of military revolutions, of three emperors enthroned and killed in less than as many years, of provinces wasted and cities stormed and burnt. The page before us is stained with no blood: slayers and

slain, conquerors and conquered, are words, and words only. The events recorded are far off, and stir no longer any emotions of terror or pity. Yet those years were an outpouring of the wrath of the Almighty on polluted Italy. The armies of the several frontiers demanded the purple for their favourite commanders, and gathered down upon the peninsula to make good their furious pleasure. They came from Spain and from the Rhine, from the Danube, from Britain, from the Euphrates, from Egypt. The empire was like an oak, hollow at the heart, but vigorous in the branches. The legions, recruited no longer from the Latin peasants, were filled with Gauls and Spaniards, Thracians and Germans—fierce animals, half tamed by military discipline, but with the savage nature boiling out when the rein was slackened. With no common purpose, except perhaps some resolution that the accursed scenes which they heard reported from Rome should come to an end, those nearest at hand streamed down over the passes of the Alps. Others followed. Town after town was sacked and given to the flames. The Imperial city, the harlot of the seven hills, the mother of iniquities, was taken and retaken among the partisans of rival claimants for the purple. The Capitol was burnt, the streets and gardens were littered for

weeks or months with unburied bodies. Debauched legionaries rioted in the palaces of the nobles till indulgence had broken their strength, and other wild bands burst in to tear the spoil from them. A Christian, with a real belief, must have seen in this tremendous visitation the immediate hand of Providence, and, if he was a person of any imaginative intelligence, the description of the opening of the seals in the vision of St. John would not seem an exaggerated description of the history of those fearful years. That vision may have had other meanings. No one can say certainly to what St. John refers. Yet metaphor might be piled on metaphor, and image upon image, and all would have been too little to have expressed the feelings likely to have been experienced in that deluge of fire and blood by a Christian who had escaped alive from the torch festival of Nero.

It had been prophesied that salvation was to come from the East. The eyes of the Roman world were turned with passionate longing to Vespasian and the army of Syria. That Vespasian had been 'marked as extraordinary,' had been proved by miracles which he was reluctantly persuaded to attempt in Alexandria, and which he had succeeded in accomplishing. A blind man was restored to sight, and a man with a disabled hand had recovered the use of it under cir-

cumstances which curiously resemble those of the Gospel miracles.[1] His future greatness had been foretold to him by a prophet on Mount Carmel. He was first saluted emperor by the legions of Cæsarea. If Cornelius the Centurion, the first Gentile convert, had not died in the short interval after St. Peter's visit to him, he, it is reasonable to suppose, was one of the actors in the revolution. Vespasian was welcomed to the purple with acclamation, and a time was found again for 'frighted peace to pant.' The race of the Cæsars was gone, their glory and their crimes alike ended, and a more modest era again commenced. The Fasti, *adulatione temporum fœdati*, were purged

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[1] 'E plebe Alexandrinâ quidam oculorum tabe notus genua ejus advolvitur, remedium cæcitatis exposcens gemitu, monitu Serapidis Dei quem dedita superstitionibus gens ante alios colit: precabaturque principem ut genas et oculorum orbes dignaretur respergere oris excremento. Alius, manum æger, eodem Deo auctore, ut pede ac vestigio Cæsaris calcaretur orabat. Vespasianus primo irridere, aspernari, atque illis instantibus modo famam vanitatis metuere, modo obsecratione ipsorum et vocibus adulantium in spem induci: postremo æstimari a medicis jubet an talis cæcitas ac debilitas ope humanâ superabiles forent. Medici varie disserere. Huic non exesam vim luminis, et redituram si pellerentur obstantia: illi elapsos in pravum artus si salubris vis adhibeatur posse integrari. Id fortasse cordi Diis, et divino ministerio principem electum. Denique patrati remedii gloriam penes Cæsarem, irriti ludibrium penes miseros fore. Igitur Vespasianus, cuncta fortunæ suæ patere ratus nec quicquam ultra incredibile, læto ipse vultu, erectâ quæ adstabat multitudine jussa exsequitur. Statim conversa ad usum manus, ac cæco reluxit dies. Utrumque qui interfuere nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendacio pretium.'—Tacit. *Hist.*, lib. iv., c. 81.

of their enormous additions. The Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was rebuilt with peculiar solemnity. The impious rites were abolished, sacrifices and litanies were offered once more to the old accredited Gods and Goddesses, and a wet sponge was drawn over the hideous past. After the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, the two million Jews who were dispersed over the empire contributed the annual double drachma, previously remitted to the High Priest, to the sacred edifices at Rome. Once more there was decency and order, and men could live and breathe with some shadow of self-respect. Thus were secured eighty more years (with intervals of relapse) of peace, equitable government, and moderate manners, a renewal and prolongation in a weakened form of the era of Augustus; eighty years which Gibbon considered to have been, on the whole, the happiest which mankind have ever experienced.

But this was all. The dead Gods could be replaced in the temples. The mythology was made endurable for a time by allegoric interpretations. But belief had become impossible for ever. And again the question rose: Where was Providence? what signs could be found of a divine rule? Not in the emperors. After the experience of Nero, that illusion was no longer possible. The Cæsars themselves

required to be explained and accounted for in a universe presided over by a moral power. The distracted provincials had to be told that a bad emperor was a natural calamity, like tempests or plagues. They must bear with him and hope for a change.[1] On thinking minds, therefore, the problem returned, 'Where was the promise of his coming?' Why was it well with the wicked? Why were the good allowed to suffer? What was the nature of the rule under which the universe was governed after all? Tacitus wavered between chance and fate.[2] The mocking spirit in Lucian asks Jupiter if ever once since he came to the throne he had attempted to discriminate between good and bad, and apportion reward to merit, and dares him to mention one such instance. Some there were, so Tacitus says, who tried to believe that the popular notions of good and evil might be mistaken; that men might suffer and yet be happy, be

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[1] Thus Cerealis, the Prefect of Northern Gaul, said at Treves, when Vitellius was emperor: 'Quomodo sterilitatem aut nimios imbres et cætera naturæ mala, ita luxum vel avaritiam dominantium tolerate. Vitia erunt, donec homines: sed neque hæc continua et meliorum interventu pensantur.'—Tacit. *Hist.*, lib. iv., c. 74.

[2] 'Sed mihi hæc atque talia audienti in incerto judicium est, fatone res mortalium et necessitate immutabili an forte volvantur. Quippe sapientissimos veterum, quique sectam eorum æmulantur, diversos reperies, ac multis insitam opinionem non initia nostri, non finem, non denique homines Diis curæ; ideo creberrime tristia in bonos, læta apud deteriores esse.' Tac. *Annals*, vi., 22.

prosperous and yet be miserable. But this was paradox. No real conviction could be based on obscure possibilities; and the great Roman world went upon its way back into vice, back into madness and atheism, till the dead shell fell off, and a living Christian Church, grown to imperial stature, was found standing on the ruins of the constitution of the Cæsars.

Why was it well with the wicked? The theology of paganism could give no answer, for the 'wealth' of paganism was the 'wealth' of the modern Englishman—money and broad lands and health to enjoy them—and the most pious disposition to believe could not blind itself to the principles on which wealth of this kind was distributed. Paganism had allotted as the special dominion of the Gods the natural forces which were beyond man's control. In the operation of these forces there was no trace of a moral Governor, and men who refused to lie looked the truth in the face and acknowledged it. Moral government, which openly and visibly rewarded merit and punished vice and crime, extended precisely so far as the authority of man extended and no further. The oracles, the legendary tales, the devout imaginations of what the Gods had done in the old times, the prophecies of what the Gods would do in the future, these would no longer satisfy. The facts

of experience were too stern to be trifled with. The struggling conscience had demanded reality, and had built temples to Divus Cæsar. This, too, had not availed. A society constructed like that of the Cæsars, on the policeman and economic laws, is a body without life; and by an everlasting law of nature, which men may quarrel with, may deny to exist, yet from which they can no more escape than they can escape from their own dissolution, such a society, such a kingdom of this world, will become a kingdom of the Devil.

What was the truth, then? What was this inexorable sphinx which sat by the highway of humanity, propounding its enigma and devouring every one who could not divine the answer? In the most despised of the Roman provinces, among groups of peasants and fishermen, on the shores of a Galilean lake, the answer had been given, and there, in that remote and humble region, a new life had begun for mankind. They had looked for a union of God with man. They thought that they had found it in Cæsar. Divided from Cæsar by the whole diameter of society, they found it at last in the Carpenter of Nazareth. The kingdom of Cæsar was a kingdom over the world; the kingdom of Christ was a kingdom in the heart of man.

I am a King, he said (if it be permitted to paraphrase his words). I bid you follow me and be my servants; but my kingdom is not such a kingdom as you look for. It is the kingdom of God. The philosophers of the world say there is no kingdom of God, because no justice can be found in the apportionment of good and evil. What the world calls good is not the fit reward of human virtue. What the world calls evil is not the punishment of sin. The Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, were not sinners above other Galileans. Suffering, you say, if it is just, must be a punishment of sin, and you ask where the sin lay when a man was born blind? Does this perplex you? Do you say God is indifferent? I bid you find rather in this indifference an example for yourselves to imitate. Your Father in heaven makes his rain to fall on the just and the unjust, and is good to the unthankful and the evil. Be you like Him. The kingdom of God is within you. If you would enter it, put away your false measure of good and evil; the road into that kingdom is through the Cross. I will not make you great. I will not give you honours, and lands, and gold and jewels. I will promise you no immunity from disease, or suffering, or death. To these things the Gentiles look, and when they are

not awarded, on principles which they call just, they doubt if there is any God in heaven. These are not the wages which you will earn in my service. Come to me and I will make you good men. I will make you rulers over your own selfishness, your own appetites and lusts. I will set you free from sin. Make this your object, to be free from sin, to lead pure and true and honourable lives. I will then be with you. I will dwell in you. I will give you a peace of mind of which the world knows nothing. I will be a well of water in you, springing up into everlasting life. You wish for prosperity, you wish for pleasure, you wish for the world's good things. But prosperity will be no help to you in the conquest of yourselves. It may rather be a hindrance. Sorrow and suffering are not evils. They are the school in which you may learn self-command. The empire to which I bid you aspire is higher than the Cæsars'. It is the empire over your own hearts. The reward I offer you is greater than the purple. It is the redemption of your own character. This is the Providence of God, for which you looked and failed to find it. And it is just to the smallest fibre of it. External things obey the laws assigned to them. The moral Ruler whom you desire to know is not to be found by looking at these. He is here; he is in the heart of man. He

is in me who now speak to you. He will be in you if you struggle to obey him and to do his will. To be happy is not the purpose for which you are placed in this world. Examine your own hearts. Ask your conscience and it will answer you. Were the choice offered you, whether you would be prosperous and wicked, or whether your life should be a life of prolonged misfortune, and you should rise out of it purified and ennobled, every one of you knows the answer which he ought to give. Therefore your complaint, that it is well with the wicked, and that the good are afflicted, is confuted out of your own lips. You would not change conditions with the wicked, however prosperous they may seem, unless you are yourself wicked. To that man life has been most kind whose character it has trained most nearly to perfection.

Desire, first, to be good men—true in word, just in action, pure in spirit. Seek these, whatever else befall you. So you will know God, whom you have sought and could not find. So out of men who have life in them shall grow a society that has life, and the kingdom of the world shall be made in truth a kingdom of God.

ON THE USES OF A LANDED GENTRY.[1]

BEFORE I proceed with the address which I have undertaken to deliver this evening, I ought to explain why I have chosen a subject which lies outside the usual lines. Your institution is philosophical not political, and these lectures are properly confined to subjects on which, if we cannot all agree, we ought to be able to agree to differ.

I might say that the question of the Uses to the Community of a Landed Gentry is in this country purely a philosophical one. It is certainly not a practical question. It is no question of practical politics. No reasonable man that I know of seriously wishes for an agrarian law, or for a forcible division of landed property, or for an interference with the right of making settlements, or with our right to

[1] Address delivered at the Philosophical Institution at Edinburgh, November 6, 1876.

make our own wills in whatever way may seem good to us.

There are persons, perhaps, who do not like the way in which the land is apportioned—who would wish it was more evenly shared among the people. But they wish it only as they might wish that we had a drier or a milder climate. There are others who are well satisfied with things as they are; who have no objection to the large estates, who do not quarrel with primogeniture, who are well satisfied with entails, particularly if they have the happiness of benefiting by them. But they do not like the subject to be talked about, and would prefer that it should be judiciously let alone. I cannot see that there is any need for reticence. In a free country like ours the distribution of land depends on economic laws as absolute as the law of gravity. So long as the British nation continues as it is, the landed gentry are as fixed a part of it as the planets of the solar system. Individuals may fall from their spheres and ruin themselves by their own folly. The institution itself is as secure as the succession of the seasons as long as the inclination of the pole remains unaltered.

Why this should be is an interesting problem of social philosophy well deserving more enquiry than it has received. My own object, however, when I

originally thought of addressing you on the landed gentry, was far less ambitious. Three years ago, when your directors were kind enough to ask me to come here, the misdoings of a certain class of landlords had been much talked about in connection with the Irish Land Act. An acquaintance of my own, Mr. Smith, of the Scilly Isles, had recently died. Mr. Smith had possessed exceptional and unusual powers in those islands, and had not abused them. I thought that at such a time an account of such a man and his doings might not be unwelcome as an evidence that a landlord was not necessarily as pernicious a being as some people appeared to think. It used to be said before the American war that masters who were kind to their slaves were the worst enemies that the slaves had. They were made the apology for a detestable institution. I have heard the same objection made to good husbands by advanced advocates of the rights of women. On similar grounds a bad opinion may be formed of Mr. Smith, and now at this distance of time I do not mean to trouble you at any length about him. Circumstances prevented my taking up the subject when it would have been more to the purpose, and the years which have since rolled by have brought other interests with them. Good actions do to some

extent serve as salt to keep a man's memory fresh, but the world is for the living and not for the dead. A very few words on Mr. Smith are all to which I shall ask you to listen.

I will bespeak your good opinion for him by saying first that he was an advanced Radical. He was a believer in Bentham. 'The greatest happiness of the greatest number' was the rule of his life. Besides his property in Scilly he had an estate at Berkhampstead, in Hertfordshire. At Berkhampstead there is an extensive common, one of the few great commons remaining in England, a free expanse of grass and forest, much valued by the country-side and by all the neighbourhood. On either side of it lay the estates of a great nobleman, inconveniently divided by the intruding wilderness; and the inconvenience to the noble lord himself assumed the aspect of a public injury. A common which belonged to the people, appeared to him to belong to no one in particular. He meant no harm. He was incapable of doing anything which he did not believe to be just; but he was informed by those who managed his estates for him, that it would be to the general advantage if the occasion of so much disorder was taken away. He doubted the result of an appeal to law, but a plea was found which he hoped might sustain him if he was once in posession. He fenced the common in, and he left

the people of Berkhampstead to find their remedy. The smaller landowners, as he expected, did not like to quarrel with their powerful neighbour. The poor, who were the most injured, had the least means of protecting themselves, and Berkhampstead Common would have gone the way of a hundred others except for Mr. Augustus Smith. Mr. Smith heard what had been done. He perceived that the advantage would be with the party which was actually in occupation. Instead of bringing an action against the noble lord, he brought a hundred and fifty navvies one dark night down from London. When morning came fifteen hundred yards of iron railings were lying flat upon the ground. They were never set up again, and Berkhampstead Common still belongs to you and to me, and to any one who chooses to enjoy himself there.

But now for what Mr. Smith did in Scilly. The Scilly Isles are a prolongation of the granite backbone of Devonshire and Cornwall, and are, in fact, but a cluster of granite hill-tops standing out of the water. The largest island is from four to six miles round. Three others are about half that size; the rest, some hundreds in number, are little more than rocks. Before the Reformation, Scilly was occupied by monks, who had a fancy for such places. When the monks went it became a pirates' nest, and

then a haunt of privateers and smugglers. After the great war it sank into the condition of some of your own western islands. The population was large, as it always is where there is no motive for prudence. The people were miserably poor; they lived in squalid hovels, with a half acre or an acre of ground, which they manured with seaweed. They eked out their livelihood by fishing, piloting, and occasional smuggling ventures. They had no schools, and they had public-houses; and spirits were cheap where customs duties were so easily evaded.

The Crown is the owner of these islands. Circumstances, about forty years ago, induced Mr. Smith to take a long lease of them. As sole lessee he became absolute master there; and if any one wishes to see what can be done by one man of no extraordinary abilities, but with a strong will and a resolute purpose to do good, let him employ his next summer holiday in paying Scilly a visit.

Mr. Smith at once altered the small tenures so as to make improvement possible. He broke up the small holdings and combined them into farms on which a family could be maintained in decency. He provided work at competent wages for those who were deprived of their potato patches. He drained. He enclosed the fields. He rebuilt the cottages in a form

fit for human beings. He set up boat-yards, and organised the fishing business. He stopped drunkenness with a high hand. Incorrigible blackguards he shipped off to the mainland. He built chapels and endowed them. He built schools and provided proper teachers for them. The young lads were trained generally for the sea, and with such effect that when I last enquired I was told that the Scilly pilots had the best name of all the pilots at the mouth of the Channel, and that there was not a Scilly boy in the merchant service, above twenty-one, who was a sailor before the mast; all were masters or petty officers.

The soil, properly cultivated, began to produce unheard-of crops. The soft, warm climate brings vegetation forward early, and the Scilly gardeners are now making their fortunes by supplying spring vegetables to the London market. Throughout the compass of the British Islands you will not find an equal number of people on an equal area, on an average, so well clothed, so well fed, so well lodged, so well educated. In the largest island there is but one constable, and he is the only person there who has nothing to do. The whole place wears—or did wear when I was there—an air of quiet industry, prosperity, order, and discipline.

These results Mr. Smith arrived at by the arbi-

trary exercise of his power as landlord. He was a Radical who looked to ends rather than means. He desired to promote the greatest happiness of the people dependent on him, and he took the readiest road to his object. He found Scilly a rabbit warren of paupers. He made it a thriving community of industrious men and women. If boys and girls wanted to marry, and could not show that they were in a condition to support a family, he told them that he had no room for them; they must wait till they had money at the savings' bank, or they must move off to the mainland. He was a king on a small scale. Within the law his authority was absolute, and he used it not for himself but for his subjects. He made no money in Scilly. He told me a few years before his death that he had laid out more there than he had ever received. He was a thrifty man in his own habits, and had few luxuries but his garden. His rents he spent upon the people, and when he died he left the islands trebled in mere money value.

'There is prosperity of a kind, undoubtedly,' said a philosophic Radical to me, who had been to Scilly to study what was going on; 'but it is paternal government. I detest paternal government.' Paternal government may be detestable where you have the wrong sort of father. Men like Mr. Smith are

rare; but I am none the less thankful when a rare chance gives the right man the right opportunity. If the islanders had been as free as Mr. Mill would have desired to see them, and if they had been all animated with the most determined spirit of self-improvement, they could not have accomplished in a hundred years what Mr. Smith accomplished for them in one generation. He valued liberty as much as any man when liberty meant resistance to what was wrong. He was less patient of liberty to resist what was clearly and indisputably right.

He had his foibles. He was the wicked man of the islands. You know the story of the wicked man. It is so old that perhaps I ought not to mention it. A clergyman of the Church of England had taken a friend's duty in a parish where there was a despotic squire who did not allow the service to be commenced before his arrival. The clergyman, not knowing the custom, began at the proper hour with the opening words of the English Liturgy, 'When the wicked man turneth away,' &c. The clerk started up in his seat and said, 'I beg your pardon, sir, he is not come yet.'

This was the rule in Scilly when I was there. The Lord of the Isles, as Mr. Smith was called, was supreme in Church as well as State. He is gone now.

Another king rules in his stead. I trust he may prove a wicked man too, like his uncle.

This may be all very well, says my Radical friend, but we cannot keep up a system which gives one man a power over the fortunes of thousands because one in a hundred may now and then make a wholesome use of it. It might answer when the nation was half-grown. We are of age now, and have done with leading-strings. The land belongs to the people. No limited number of persons have a right to raise fences round their thousands or ten thousands of acres, and say, 'This land is mine. None but I shall enter upon it.' The soil is the common inheritance of all sons of Adam who are born into the world. The way to improve landlords is to improve them out of existence.

The same idea was once expressed to me by Mr. Hartley Coleridge. 'Property!' he said, 'I hate the word; because I have not got any of my own.'

Of course every one born into this world must live on the land, and be fed on what the land produces; at least outside China, where a few millions, I believe, live in barges and are fed on fish. But we don't want a general scramble. There must be some arrangement. The Socialist says the land should be held by the State, and be portioned out to those who will

cultivate it. Is the State to resume these portions at its pleasure? If yes, what becomes of personal liberty? If no, you have a multitude of small proprietors instead of a few large ones. And what is to prevent them from selling their interest, and the large estates from growing again? In Great Britain and among the British people such as we know them, you may divide the land as you please; but if you leave personal liberty the phenomena which you deprecate are certain to recur.

A few years ago there was a loud outcry at what was called the monopoly of land. Twelve noblemen were said to own half Scotland, a few hundreds to own half England. The quarter of a million freeholders who existed in Queen Anne's time were supposed to have dwindled to thirty thousand, and their numbers to be yearly diminishing. An enquiry was made. We have a new Domesday Book, and it appears that instead of no more than thirty thousand freeholders in this country, we have nearly a million. Yet the details, when looked into, do in part bear out what the agitators complained of. The House of Lords does own more than a third of the whole area of Great Britain. Two-thirds of it really belongs to great peers and commoners, whose estates are continually devouring the small estates adjoining them.

The remaining third, in and about the great towns, is subdivided, and the subdivision is continually increasing, but the land there also is still falling mainly into the hands of the rich.

Near the cities spade cultivation answers from the ready market for garden produce; and small freeholds, purely agricultural, are held in this way. But in general rich speculators buy land about the cities for building, and bid high for it. Successful tradesmen, merchants, or manufacturers want houses of their own in the neighbourhood, outside the smoke, with gardens and a small dairy-farm as a luxury. Under these conditions the small holdings multiply.

At a distance from the cities we have exactly the opposite. Agricultural land, on an average, pays but two per cent. interest on its selling value. A yeoman cultivating his own land finds it to his advantage to sell it, rent it from some one else, and employ his purchase money in his business. A young Scotch or Englishman, coming into possession of an estate worth a few hundreds a year, if he has any spirit in him, does not settle down upon it in obscurity. He sells his scanty acres, takes his capital with him, and invests it where he can get some better return, or he goes into trade or emigrates. There are these two tendencies in operation

which you cannot interfere with while you leave us our liberty, and both of them give the land to those who can afford to pay for it as a luxury.

Will you tell the embarrassed owner of a small property that he is not to sell it? The law of entail does say this in some instances, and so tends to preserve the small properties. People complain of the law of entail as if it interfered with the subdivision of landed property. It rather sustains such small estates as remain. Abolish entail if you please, but accumulation will only proceed the more rapidly.

Will you tell a large landowner that he is not to buy a property adjoining his own, when he will give a higher price for it than any one else? You cannot do this without robbing the person who wishes to sell.

Will you have the Code Napoléon? Will you insist that when a landowner dies his estate shall be divided among his children? If you were to pass such a law you would fail still to produce the effect which is produced in France, because the British and French people are essentially different. The home of the French peasant is France, and he will thrive nowhere else. The home of the Scot or the Englishman is the whole globe. Three centuries ago we were confined within our own four seas. Where are

we now? We have spread over North America. We are filling Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. There is scarcely a seaport in either hemisphere where you will not find an English-speaking community. I once heard a discussion at a *table-d'hôte* at Madrid, between twenty or thirty commercial travellers, as to which language was of most use to them. There was not an Englishman in the party, but they all agreed that the English language would carry them farthest. Create your small landed proprietors by law, and the energetic among them will still sell, and carry their capital to a better market.

Primogeniture! you will say. At least there ought to be no primogeniture. Why make a distinction between personal property and real property? Why should an eldest son be preferred to his brothers and sisters, to his own injury and theirs? Abolish primogeniture by all means if you can. I need not say a word in favour of it, but understand what it is that you would change. It is not a law. It is a custom. The law gives the land to the eldest son if the father dies without a will. But he need not die without a will. He can divide his land among his children if he pleases. The fact is that he does not please. Primogeniture is the custom which he follows and assists to make. The law does

not take effect in one case out of a thousand. Even the law is not universally the same. The Saxon gavelkind remains in Kent. But the practice in Kent is the same as the practice elsewhere. Men leave their lands to their eldest sons because they wish to preserve their families. If you want a change you must alter their nature, or else you must take away their liberty.

Again, it is said the conveyance of land ought to be easier than it is. In other countries you can buy a piece of land as easily as a yard of calico. In England the process is so expensive as to put a few acres beyond a poor man's reach. You may cheapen conveyancing, yet the poor man will still not get his acres. The more easy the transfer, the faster the land will flow in the channels which it tends of itself to follow.

But the less obstruction the better. Let us have free trade in land by all means, as in everything else. There is but one serious objection that I know of. I cannot tell how it may suit the lawyers. When the Reformation began in England, the House of Commons complained to the Crown of the enormous expenses of the Ecclesiastical Courts. The Archbishop of Canterbury said in reply, that no doubt the proceedings in the courts were costly, but

the costs went to maintain a very excellent class of persons, without whom the country would be exceedingly ill off, the learned gentlemen of the long robe. There is force in this answer. I should be sorry to say anything against it. One of the most valuable lessons which I have learnt in life is the prudence of keeping on good terms with the lawyers.

On the whole it seems to me certain that unless the area of Great Britain could be made larger than it is, or until the British people change their nature, a peasant proprietary is a dream. So long as a free energetic race of men are crowded together in a small space with every variety of employment open to them at home, with wide avenues to distinction offering themselves abroad, and with every individual striving to push his way to a higher station than that in which he was born, so long the ownership of land will be the luxury of the comparatively few. A time I suppose will arrive when the giddy whirl of industry and progress will cease among us, when we shall no longer struggle for a first place among the nations. Then the tide will ebb; then the great estates will dissolve, and the soil will again be divided among unambitious agricultural freeholders. The land then will suffice for the support of all who live upon it. The grass will grow in the

streets of Manchester. The Clyde will eddy round the rotting wrecks of the Glasgow merchant-ships, and the plough will pass over the gardens of its merchant princes. The reign of Saturn will come back, and the golden age of pastoral simplicity. Till that time comes you must lay your account for a landed gentry of some kind, and accepting the inevitable fact, you must try to make the best of it.

Nor do I think the prospect need much disturb us. Our landed system is like our political system: it consists of a number of petty monarchies, which are gradually becoming restricted by custom, till the monarch shall remain powerful for good and comparatively powerless to hurt. Let us put the worst side of it first. The restraints upon a landlord's power which are not self-imposed by the grant of leases, are still mainly restraints of usage and public opinion, and men are unequally amenable to these influences.

The possession of a large estate carries with it authority which can still be abused, and this authority may fall by the accident of birth to a person unfit to be trusted with it. The young heir is a fool or a spendthrift, and tenants, labourers, every one dependent upon him, suffer in consequence.

Nature provides a remedy of a kind. Folly brings

difficulties, and difficulties bankruptcy. The incompetent owner is sold up. Nature shakes him off, and puts a better in his place. Society, like each of ourselves, is perpetually renovating itself. The used-up tissue of our bodies passes away at every moment —young and healthy tissue is growing instead of it. Watch the land tenure in any busy county of England, and you will be surprised to see how rapidly a similar process is going on. I was standing a few years ago on a hill about fifteen miles from London, looking round over the richly cultivated country—dark woods marking here and there the parks and pleasure-grounds of the lords of the soil. I asked my companion, who himself was one of them, how long on an average an estate remained about there in the same family. He answered, perhaps twenty years.

Again, there is the wilder remedy which we used to hear of in the sister island. The landlord may become a direct oppressor. He may care nothing for the people, and have no object but to squeeze the most that he can out of them, fairly or unfairly. The Russian Government has been called despotism tempered by assassination. In Ireland for many years landlordism was tempered by assassination.

Unfortunately the wrong man was generally assassinated. The true criminal was an absentee, and his

agent was shot instead of him. A noble lord living in England, two of whose agents had lost their lives already in his service, ordered the next to post a notice in his Barony that he intended to persevere in what he was doing, and if the tenants thought they would intimidate him by shooting his agents, they would find themselves mistaken.

Thus the desired result was not effected, and Ireland could not be left to natural remedies; every circumstance combined in that country to exasperate the relations between landlord and tenant. The landlords were, for the most part, aliens in blood and aliens in religion. They represented conquest and confiscation, and they had gone on from generation to generation with an indifference to the welfare of the people which would not have been tolerated in England and Scotland. The law had to interfere at last to protect the peasantry in the shape of Mr. Gladstone's Land Act; the best measure, perhaps the only good measure, which has been passed for Ireland for the last two hundred years.

In Ireland there are good landlords, more than are ever heard of. The object of Mr. Gladstone's Act was simply to shape a law out of the good landlords' practice and make the bad conform to it. It was called confiscation; I know not what was confiscated.

Nothing certainly to which the landlord had any equitable right. The selling value of land has not diminished in Ireland since that Act was passed. It has rather risen from the increase of security.

It is possible that a similar law may become necessary in England and Scotland. It is possible, if infinitely improbable. Responsibility is the shadow of a great position. If a time should ever come when the heirs of great estates forget that they *have* any responsibility, if they come to suppose that the world was made for them, not they for the world, that the sole duty laid on them is the duty of enjoying themselves, that they are permitted to idle away a life made weary to them by its inanity between the London season, the foreign watering-place, the deer forest, the battue, or a salmon river; then it is easy to prove that an end will come to all that.

I was staying the year before the Irish famine at a large house in Connaught. We had a great gathering there of the gentlemen of the county; more than a hundred of us sat down to a luncheon on the lawn. My neighbour at the table was a Scotchman, who was over there examining the capabilities of the soil. 'There,' he said to me, 'you see the landed gentry of this county. In all the number there may be one, at the most two, who believe that the Almighty

put them into this world for any purpose but to shoot grouse, race, gamble, drink, or break their necks in the hunting-field. They are not here at all for such purposes, and one day they will find it so.'

The day of reckoning was nearer than he thought. Next year came the potato disease. The estates of most of them were mortgaged, and at best they had only a margin to live upon. Rents could not be paid. The poor people were dying of hunger, and a poor-rate had to be laid on amounting, in places, to confiscation. The Encumbered Estates Act followed, and the whole set of them were swept clean away.

We are not come to that pass here, nor do I believe we are likely to come. Even here we have heard occasionally of strange things being done; uncalled-for evictions of tenantry, with mountain and glen closed against the tourist and the artist, that a noble lord and his friends may shoot a few miserable deer. But the tendency of things is not to an increase of all that, very far otherwise.

Another noble lord that I know of has a mountain property in Kerry which would make the finest deer-forest in these islands. He has the same temptation to make a deer-forest as those others have. As a forest it would bring him five times the present rent. Some forty or fifty families only would have to be

removed from their farms, and they could be bought out under the Land Act with enormous profit to the landlord. But the deer are not on the mountains, and those families remain on their farms. The same noble lord spends four-fifths of the income which he draws from that property in improving the condition of the people. No one speaks of this; no one ever talks of what is done wisely and well. Health is never conscious of itself. We are only conscious of our own bodies when something is amiss with us. Offences only attract notice. Judge of British society from the police reports, and we are a nation of savages. Yet we are always forgetting this. We hear of the bad exceptions. We hear of them because they are exceptions, and we argue as if they were the rule.

Well then, gentlemen, let us turn from the mischief which may come of a landed gentry, and let us see what good comes of them.

Since land does not pay as a commercial speculation, why do rich men give such large prices for it? Land is sought after for the social consequence and for the political influence which the possession of a large estate in such a country as ours confers. It is sought after from an ambition to leave our names behind us, rooted into the soil to which the national

life is attached. To obtain or keep such a position, money must be sacrificed to other considerations; and the sacrifice must be maintained and continued if the landowner is to preserve the objects for which it is made. The same force in nature appears now as heat, now as motion; one can be converted into the other. Wealth in the same way may appear in the form of luxury, or it may appear in the form of power. The landowner who desires honour and influence spends the rents which fall to him rather as a revenue than as a private income. The manager of the estates of a noble duke who is nominally one of the richest men in Great Britain said to me, that in his experience dukes never had any money.

On those estates more than a million had been laid out in a few years in rebuilding the cottages.

And the farther what is called the land monopoly is carried, the more, that is, the small estates are absorbed in the large, the better these duties will be performed. I don't know how it may be in Scotland, but I know that in England you can tell by the look of the country which you are passing through whether it belongs to a large landowner or a small one.

Compare an estate owned by one man with a hundred thousand a year, and a similar estate divided among a hundred owners with a thousand a year

each. On which of these will the working tenants find themselves best off? The one great man's establishment may be expensive, but after all it is but one. The expenses of the most splendid household will not reach a hundred thousand a year, or half that sum, or a quarter of it. The great man is on a pedestal. If he is evil spoken of his pedestal becomes a pillory. Therefore he does not press his rights when he might press them. The customs of the manor are generally observed. Farm buildings are kept in good condition, fences are in good repair, cottages have roofs which will keep the rain out. You find churches, you find schools, you find everything which public opinion demands or approves.

Turn to the estate which is divided between the hundred less conspicuous proprietors. Will an equal margin of income be forthcoming for improvements? Will there be the same consideration for tenants and labourers? There cannot be, because a hundred private establishments have to be supported instead of one, and a hundred families struggling to maintain the position of gentry with inadequate means. By them every farthing which their estate will yield is required for their ordinary expenditure. They are embarrassed. They must borrow. Their obvious duties are left undone. You read the story in un-

mended fences, in broken gates, in decaying farm-houses. At length a crisis comes, and unless entail interferes the land is sold to some one who can better afford to keep it.

Latifundia perdidere Italiam — the great estates ruined Italy. The yeomen who had formed the Roman armies had disappeared. The land had become the monopoly of the rich. What ruined Italy we are told will ruin Great Britain.

The argument mistakes the character of what is going on. The great estates in Italy under the empire were cultivated by slaves. The free men had been destroyed. Are the estates in Great Britain cultivated by slaves? Is the Scotch tenant who is farming another man's land a slave? Is he on the road to becoming a slave? He would be much amused if he was told so. At the bottom of his mind he knows that he is moving in an entirely opposite direction. We are but treading over again the same road which our ancestors travelled four or five centuries ago. The villein, or cultivator, under the feudal system, had originally no rights but what his lord allowed him. The lower kind of villein or serf was his lord's property as much as his horse or his dog. But custom gave the villein, by degrees, the rights of a free man. He was allowed to plead

against his lord the usage of the manor. Usage passed into law, and villein tenure became copyhold tenure. The English farmer became independent in all but the name, and hence grew the yeomen freeholders whose loss we are now deploring. They are gone most of them; gone because they chose to go. Look for the British copyholders now; you find them founding empires in the four quarters of the globe; but another race of them is springing from the same stem. The absolute rights of the modern landowner are slipping from his hands, with his own consent, by precisely the same process. The subtle meshes of opinion are spread over him, and landlord right submits to be restrained by reasonable tenant right.

But what the landlord loses in direct authority he regains, if he is wise, in influence, and this leads me to say a few words about countries in which a landed gentry no longer exists.

France shook off her landed proprietors at the Revolution. Many lost their heads, many more were exiled. The French landed aristocracy had become intolerable. They began to disappear of themselves. The Revolution completed what nature had commenced. France is now divided into between five and six million freeholds. At the death of a proprietor his land is shared among his children, and

the partition is only arrested at the point at which the family of the cultivator can be fed. A friend of mine who wanted two or three acres for a garden had to purchase from seventeen different owners. A tenant farmer (for there are tenant farmers even in France) rents often from as many landlords as a landlord in England has tenants.

The result, undoubtedly, is thrift, industry, good spade cultivation, and great material prosperity. The magic of property, as Mr. Mill long since pointed out, will turn an arid waste into a garden. The peasant works and saves because he knows that he works for himself and his family. He is conservative, for he has something of his own to lose. Were the British nation like the French, had we no colonies, and no outlet for industry at home, then a peasant proprietary might grow also in Kent and Hampshire. But what a price has France to pay for it! There is no emigration; yet the population diminishes. The law of subdivision forbids the peasant the luxury of many children. How the numbers are kept down it is needless to speculate.

While, again, a nation composed of a multitude of disconnected units is to an organised society what a heap of sand is to a block of granite, incapable of cohering for sustained political action. We shall see

what the Republic can do—we are bound to wish it well—but for nearly a century France has alternated between anarchy and despotism. She tears her bonds in pieces. She allows them to be refastened when she aspires to be politically strong, and then she snaps them again when the strain becomes too violent to be borne. Never in the history of the world has any great nation been so rapidly and completely overwhelmed as France was in 1870. When her armies were defeated she had no organisation left.

The French are as public-spirited as other people, but, except under the influence of political or religious passion of a definite kind, public spirit cannot combine masses of men together for a common purpose. They have not knowledge enough, they have not confidence enough for spontaneous action. They require leaders whom they can trust, and leaders cannot be extemporised in an emergency. The natural leaders in a healthy country are the gentry; public-spirited and patriotic because their own fortunes are bound up with the fortunes of their country; personal centres of organisation because their neighbours know them, and are accustomed to look up to them. France is better without the aristocracy which she destroyed, because they were worthless. She has yet to show that she can thrive as a nation without any gentry at all.

Look again at Spain. In Spain there has been no such convulsion as the French Revolution; but in Spain, too, there is no longer any order of hereditary gentlemen. The people have not degenerated. The peasantry of Castile are as strong, as brave, as loyal as the men who followed Cortez to Mexico. Their humour is fresh as ever. Sancho Panza and his ass you may meet any day in a morning's walk, but you will find no Miguel de Cervantes and no Duke of Lerma. The tombs which lie in silent beauty in the cathedrals are all that remains of the stately Mendozas, the Olivarez, the great houses of Cordova and Toledo; and Spain is what we see. The magnificent men who three centuries ago made the Castilian monarchy the most powerful in the world have given place to eloquent orators and military adventurers. And Spain has fallen from her pride of place; her arts, her literature, her arms, once alike her glory, are now alike degraded, and the national life has perished along with them.

I have often asked myself why the hidalgos, hijos d'algo, sons of somebody, as the Cid and his comrades haughtily called themselves, have so totally disappeared. I believe it was because they did not reside on their estates among their people; because they lived in the great cities attached to the court. In Burgos, in

Valladolid, in Medina, you see the places of the old nobles, their coats of arms carved in granite over the massive portals. But they had no personal relations with their tenants, or their tenants with them. They had no root, and they have withered; and they have left their once proud and glorious country the prey of priests and political charlatans and soldiers of fortune.

I shall be told that I am confounding past and present. The hidalgos are gone because they are unsuited to modern times. Public opinion, a free press, and a free platform dispense with these hereditary influences. Let the peasant and the artisan read their daily papers, and they will have no need of a gentry to lead them. It is true that much changes in this world, but there is much also which does not change, and human nature is the least changeable of all things. The English Barons extorted Magna Charta. The Long Parliament was a Parliament of English landed gentry. The English gentry made the Revolution of 1688. There is work still to be done by the descendants of those men in the country and in Parliament. Let us have all the talents in Parliament. Let trade, let science, let the learned professions, let wealth, if you like, be represented there, but it will be an ill day when we have no longer in public life the men who represent the historic traditions of Great

Britain, who are returned to Parliament with no object of their own to gain, and whose services are already pledged to the commonwealth by birth and fortune.

A distinguished American once said to me, "Hold fast to such institutions as you have left. We have none, and must do as we can without them. But do not flatter yourselves that by destroying yours you can make England like America. We are young and growing. You are in your maturity or past it. We shall rise through our difficulties. If a time comes when the English Parliament is filled with men who go there to push their own fortunes, you will perhaps not rise through yours."

Once more. We speak contemptuously of sentiment, and yet the noblest part of our existence is based on sentiment. Patriotism is sentiment. Conscience is sentiment. Honour, shame, reverence, love of beauty, love of goodness, every high aspiration which we entertain, all are sentiment. All are unpractical according to the profit and loss philosophy. Yet without them man is but an animal, lower not higher than his fellow-creatures, as his desires are more insatiable. When I say that this question is a question of sentiment, I mean that it touches the quick of our national being.

A nation, it is said, which does not respect its

past will have no future which will deserve respect. Great Britain is what it is to-day because thirty generations of strong brave men have worked with brain and hand to make it so. Nothing great ever came to men in their sleep. The fields now so clean and neatly fenced were once morasses or forests of scrub, or were littered with boulder stones. Our laws, our literature, our constitution, our empire, were built together out of materials equally unpromising. We, when we were born, came into possession of a fair inheritance. We are bound to remember from whom it came, and not to think that because we have got it we have only ourselves to thank for it. You may test the real worth of any people by the feelings which they entertain for their forefathers. With the Romans reverence for ancestors was part of the national religion. It was something like a religion here not long ago, and when the nineteenth century has sufficiently admired itself for its steam-engines and electric telegraphs, something of the same feeling, we will hope, may revive.

Every step of what is called progress for the last thousand years has been the work of some man or group of men. We talk of the tendencies of an age. The tendency of an age, unless it be a tendency to

mere death and rottenness, means the energy of superior men who guide or make it; and of these superior men who have played their parts among us at successive periods the hereditary families are the monuments. Trace them back to the founders, you generally find some one whose memory ought not to be allowed to die. And usually also in the successive generations of such a family you find more than an average of high qualities, as if there was some transmission of good blood, or as if the fear of discrediting an honourable lineage was a check on folly and a stimulus to exertion. In Scotland the family histories are inseparable from the national history. How many Campbells, for instance, have not established a right to be remembered with honour? How many hundred Scotch families are there not who have produced, I will not say one distinguished man, but a whole series of distinguished men, distinguished in all branches, as soldiers, seamen, statesmen, lawyers, or men of letters?

It is true the highest names of all will not be found in the Peerages and Baronetages. The highest of all, as Burns says, take their patent of nobility direct from Almighty God. Those patents are not made out for posterity, and the coronets which men bestow on the supremely gifted among them are

usually coronets of thorns. No titled family remains as a monument of Knox or Shakespeare. They shine alone like stars. They need no monument, being themselves immortal. A Dukedom of Stratford for the descendants of Shakespeare would be like a cap and bells upon his bust. Of Knox you have not so much as a tomb—you do not know where his bones are lying. The burial-place of Knox is the heart of Protestant Scotland.

But, speaking generally, the landed gentry are enduring witnesses of past worth and good work done, and until they forfeit our esteem by demerits of their own, they deserve to be respected and honoured. High place is lost so easily that when a family has been of long continuance we may be sure that it has survived by exceptional merit. Nature rapidly finds out when the wrong sort have stolen into promotion. When a knave makes a fortune his son spends it—one generation sees an end of him. Even among the best there is a quick succession. The marble monument in the church outlasts the living one. There are no Plantagenets now; no Tudors and few Stuarts of the old stock. The Lacies and the De Courcies drop out. The Nelsons and the Wellesleys step into their places. Warriors, lawyers, politicians, press perpetually to the front. Each

age has its own heroes, who in its own eyes are greater than all that went before. The worn-out material is for ever being replaced with new. Each family thus raised is on its trial. Those who survive remain as links between the present and the past, and carry on unbroken the continuity of our national existence. In such families the old expression *Noblesse oblige* is a genuine force. In a chapel attached to the church of Cheynies in Hertfordshire lies the honoured dust of ten generations of the house of Russell. There is Lord William, carried thither from the scaffold at Lincoln's Inn. There is Lady Rachel. There are the successive Earls and Dukes of Bedford, who, wise or unwise, have been always true to the people's side through three centuries of political struggle. At one end of the chapel are the monuments of the first Lord Russell, King Henry's minister at the Reformation, and of the first Lady Russell, from whom all the rest are descended. There she lies, a stern, austere lady, as you can see in the lines of her marble countenance, evidently an exact likeness, modelled from her features. I could not but feel, as I stood in that chapel, what a thing it would be to know that in death one had to be carried into the presence of that terrible ancestress and that august array of her descendants, and to be examined

whether one had been worthy of the race to which one belonged.

But enough of this, and I will bring what I have to say to an end. It appears to me, for the reasons I have given, that a landed gentry of some sort must exist in a country so conditioned as ours. The only question is whether we shall be satisfied with those that we have, or whether we wish to see them displaced in favour of others, to whom the land would, or might, be a mere commercial speculation. Abolish primogeniture, compel, either by law or by the weight of opinion, a subdivision of landed property, it will still be bought up and held in large quantities, but it will be held by successful men of business, who, being no longer able to look forward to permanence of occupancy, and therefore having no motive for wishing to secure the goodwill of the people living around them, will regard their possessions from a money point of view, and will aim at nothing but obtaining from them the largest possible amount of profit and pleasure for themselves.

A change of this kind will not conduce to our national welfare. It is perhaps coming; but I think it is still far off. The revolutionary wave which began to rise in the middle of the last century seems for the present to have spent its force. Men no longer

believe that revolution will bring the millennium. They have discovered that revolution means merely a change from an aristocracy to a plutocracy, and they doubt more than they did whether much advantage comes of it after all.

The aristocracy are learning, on their side, that if they are to keep their hold in this country they must deserve to keep it. And just so far as a conviction makes its way among them that they exist for some other purpose than idle luxury, they will take out a new lease of recovered influence.

No one grudges the hard worked member of Parliament his holidays on the moor or in the hunting-field. The days by a salmon river with the flood running off, the south-wester streaming over the pool, and the fish fresh run from the sea, are marked with chalk in the lives of the bitterest Radicals of us all. Amusement is the wine of existence, warming and feeding heart and brain. But amusement, like wine also, if taken in excess, becomes as stupid as any other form of vulgar debauchery. When we read of some noble lord, with two of his friends, shooting two thousand pheasants in a week, or that another has shot four hundred brace of partridges to his own gun in a day, we perceive that these illustrious personages have been useful to the London poulterers;

but it is scarcely the work for which they are intended by the theory of their existence. The annual tournament of doves between the Lords and Commons at Hurlingham leads to odd conclusions about us on the Continent. Every institution—even the institution of a landed aristocracy—is amenable to general opinion; and it may have worse enemies than an Irish Land Act.

Fashionable follies are like soap-bubbles; the larger they are the nearer they are to bursting. Pheasant battues and pigeon-shooting will come to an end, as bull-baiting and cock-fighting came to an end. Meanwhile, the world is wide, and the British have secured handsome slices of it beyond our own island. Who in his senses—even if it were possible—would be the peasant proprietor of half a dozen acres in England when, for the sum for which he could sell them, he could buy a thousand in countries where he would be still under his own flag, among his own kindred; with an unexhausted soil, and a climate anything that he prefers, from the Arctic circle to the tropics?

You who are impatient with what you call a dependent position at home, go to Australia, go to Canada, go to New Zealand, or South Africa. There work for yourselves. There gather wealth as all but

fools or sluggards are able to gather it. Come back if you will as rich men at the end of twenty years. Then buy an estate for yourselves; and when you belong to the landed gentry in your own person, you will find your eyes opened as to their value to the community.

Will you have an example of what may be done by an ordinary man with no special talents or opportunity? A Yorkshireman, an agricultural labourer, that I knew, went to Natal twelve years ago. I suppose at first he had to work for wages; and I will tell you what the wages are in that country. I stayed myself with a settler on the borders there. He had two labourers with him, an Irishman and an Englishman. They lived in his house; they fed at his own table. To the Irishman, who knew something of farming, he was paying fourteen pounds a month; to the Englishman he was paying ten; and every penny of this they were able to save.

With such wages as these, a year or two of work will bring money enough to buy a handsome property. My Yorkshireman purchased two hundred and fifty acres of wild land outside Maritzburg. He enclosed it; he carried water over it. He planted his fences with the fast-growing eucalyptus, the Australian gum-tree. In that soil and in that climate, every-

thing will flourish, from pineapples to strawberries, from the coffee-plant and the olive to wheat and Indian corn, from oranges and bananas to figs, apples, peaches, and apricots. Now at the end of ten years the mere gum-trees which I saw on that man's land could be sold for two thousand pounds, and he is making a rapid fortune by supplying fruit and vegetables to the market at Maritzburg.

Here, as it seems to me, is the true solution of the British land question. What a Yorkshireman can do I suppose a Scotchman can do. There is already a new Scotland, so called, in South Africa ; a land of mountains and valleys and rocky streams and rolling pastures. And there is gold there, and coal, and iron, and all the elements of wealth. People that country, people any part of any of our colonies, from the younger sons who complain that there is no room for them at home. Match the New England across the Atlantic with a New Scotland in South Africa ; only tie it tighter to the old country. Spread out there and everywhere. Take possession of the boundless inheritance which is waiting for you, and leave the old Island to preserve its ancient memories under such conditions as the times permit.

PARTY POLITICS.[1]

A plague of both your houses!

THE surprise with which the elections of February were received in the political world has passed away. The new Cabinet has settled quietly into the place of its predecessors, and the country pursues its way as if nothing had happened of serious consequence. The Minister who six years ago was brought into power and endowed, in an effervescence of apparent enthusiasm, with overwhelming strength, has been dismissed with an emphasis of disapproval as distinct as the applause with which he was installed; yet no satisfactory explanation has been offered of the change of sentiment. No great questions were at issue on which opinion was divided. The victors have been modest in their success, and the vanquished have

[1] This Essay was written after the last general election, and the accession of Mr. Disraeli's Government.

borne their defeat meekly, and after the first shock of disappointment have made no angry demonstrations of intending to renew the conflict. The general feeling, so far as can be observed, is mere indifference, as if in our hearts we were weary of politics, as if we desired for the present to hear no more of them, and turned instinctively to the party who were more disposed to leave us in peace.

And yet the phenomenon is remarkable: the more remarkable the closer it is examined. The reaction (or whatever it is to be called) is essentially English. Scotland and Ireland continue true to the Radical colours. England has not only become Conservative, but is so overwhelmingly Conservative as to overbear with the most peremptory decisiveness the combined majorities of the sister kingdoms. The Press has produced its various interpretations. A Cabinet which comes into office with unusually brilliant promises is like a four-in-hand brought round in the morning from the stable-yard, the horses fresh and in high spirits, the harness glittering from the hands of the grooms, the carriage spotless in its paint and varnish. The weather is uncertain, the roads are in bad repair, littered with stones, or deep in mud which conceals treacherous holes and pitfalls The equipage which starts in splendour reaches the

end of a few stages bespattered from wheel to roof, the horses jaded and languid, perhaps lamed, traces broken and ill mended, the glory gone, the show and sparkle soiled with the accidents of common vulgar work. Changed appearance is in great degree inevitable, and is not necessarily discreditable. The favourite of the moment raises expectations which he is compelled to disappoint. He passes measures which are to inaugurate a millennium. The millennium is no nearer than before. Factions have combined to raise him to power. Each has its special object, demands attention to it, and resents neglect. Sudden exigencies of State have to be provided for or encountered. They may not admit of being dealt with satisfactorily; yet the Minister in power is made responsible for what goes wrong. By the mere necessary acts of administration—if Government is not to be reduced to a farce—the weeds which are for ever growing in the social state must be rooted out, and powerful interests are alienated in the process. Every step is scrutinised by jealous antagonists, and trivial mistakes are aggravated into deliberate injuries.

Public writers have thus been at no loss to account for the fall of Mr. Gladstone. His Irish policy may bear fruit in the future. For the present Irish agitation refuses to abate, and has been encouraged only

to make fresh demands. Many persons who supported him in overthrowing the Church Establishment already doubt the wisdom of a measure into which they were hastily betrayed. They may not wish the step to be retraced, but they would refuse their consent if it was again to be done, and they show their remorse by withdrawing their confidence from the statesman who led the attack.

The Washington treaty and the Alabama arbitration, though Mr. Gladstone was in strictness responsible for neither, yet are supposed to have lowered England in its status as a great power. We did not wish to maintain a quarrel with Russia, yet we were sore and resentful when the treaty of Paris was torn to pieces and flung in our faces. We had no desire to meddle in the French and German war, yet we did not like to see England unconsulted when the map of Europe was remodelled. Internally the Ministry made enemies whether they did well or ill. The Irish Land Bill alarmed the owners of property. The Education Bill offended the Dissenters. The abolition of purchase in the army, though welcome in itself to most reasonable persons, yet shocked us all, when the prerogative was called in to overcome the resistance of Parliament. The Licensing Bill exasperated the brewer and publican. The Adulteration

Bill stirred a hornets' nest of cheating tradesmen in every town in the kingdom. The Collier and Ewelme scandals were made too much of, but they indicated a disposition which Englishmen dislike and distrust. Mr. Gladstone himself contributed the last and fatallest blow to his popularity by the suddenness of the Dissolution, which, however he might explain it, resembled rather the coup of a Wall Street speculator, than the proud and open display of purpose and policy which Englishmen demand of Ministers in whom they are to place reliance.

In these and other shortcomings of the late Cabinet we may see some explanation of the fate which has overtaken them. Yet it is not satisfactory or sufficient. Many of Mr. Gladstone's crimes were accidents. Mr. Disraeli will be fortunate, should he remain six years in office, if he escapes worse mischances. The country shares in the responsibility for the Irish policy, and should blame itself as much as the Minister. If the Adulteration Bill made enemies of the grocers and bakers and milkmen, it should have secured the gratitude of the million consumers, whose stomachs are no longer poisoned, and their pockets emptied, by knaves and scoundrels. As to the manner of the Dissolution, the reaction was already in progress, conspicuously visible in the

single elections throughout the country, which almost without exception were going in favour of Conservatives.

It is not the purpose of the present paper to swell the list of conjectures on the causes of the fall of Mr. Gladstone, but rather to offer a few remarks which this bloodless revolution has suggested, on the mode in which the affairs of this country are at present carried on.

The Liberal party, in the first place, ought to rejoice at their defeat as making possible a continuance of the system of Government by party. Mr. Gladstone, after his failure to carry the Irish University Bill, complained of the opposition as unconstitutional. He laid down as an axiom that the House of Commons is bound to accept measures introduced by the administration; unless, in the event of those measures being rejected, the opposition is prepared to undertake the Government. If this is a correct statement of the theory, the country must insist on giving the two parties alternate turns of office. If the House is forbidden to consider measures on their own merits irrespective of the consequences of rejecting them, there must be on both sides in Parliament a body of statesmen capable of taking charge at any time of the management of public

affairs; and no such body of men can be trained or held together unless they have their share of the opportunities of gaining experience, and of learning, where alone they can be learnt, the nature of the duties which may at any time be thrown upon them. The Liberals have held office with rare and brief intervals for more than forty years. The Conservatives must take their turn at the wickets, or they will have forgotten how to handle the bat.

Party Government—the crown and glory of the British constitution—is a peculiar structure, and involves a peculiar assumption. It assumes that in Great Britain, and indeed everywhere, since we invite all mankind to copy our example, there are two lines of thought, two principles on which intelligent men form their judgment on political affairs, one or other of which every public man will adopt, but in no case will adopt both. Nature has created us with two eyes, but in matters of state, either of necessity or deliberately, we must extinguish one. We must be either hot or cold; Liberal or Conservative; advocates of change, or advocates of resistance to change. It assumes again that the leading representatives of these opposing principles shall be men, if not of equal ability, yet of ability of a first class order. There must be on either side accomplished men of

business, men who can manage the finances of the State, who can administer the army and the navy, who can take the reins of the imperial foreign policy, who can fill the highest offices of the law not only without discredit, but with honour to themselves and advantage to the nation and to the great profession to which they belong; yet all the while it must be the business of their antagonists to persuade the country that the party on the Government benches misunderstand the public interests, are incapable of their duties, are misled by prejudice, tradition, or particular interest or ambition. Whether the charges against them be true or not, their rivals must so represent them, must endeavour in season and out of season, in Parliament and on platform, in pamphlet and leading article, from the day they enter upon office, to undermine their stability, and destroy the respect of their countrymen for them.

Before the Whig Hejira of 1688, or at any rate before the accession of the Stuarts, the Sovereigns selected their Ministers from the most approved members of the Privy Council. When the Sovereigns were wise, they made their selection from all sides of opinion. They assumed that distinguished Englishmen, whatever might be their leanings, agreed in desiring the welfare of their country. The

battles on particular measures were fought out in the Cabinet behind closed doors, and to the world the administration appeared as a united and harmonious whole. Under the modern system the choice is transferred from the Crown to the House of Commons. The two parties confront each other on the public arena, as rivals always, and in time of excitement as enemies. The nation is assumed to be wiser than its leaders. The leaders are to see but one side of a public question, the nation is to see both, and to decide as it sees fit between them.

Such a system is, to say the least of it, extremely artificial. Able statesmen can usually see further than the multitude. They are exceptionally intelligent. They have fuller information; they are specially trained for their work. And yet we expect them to be like the officers of an army, forbidden to have opinions in detail on the conduct of the war in which they are engaged. They are employed by half the nation to beat the other half, and are to know no other obligation.

Party Government, no doubt, has its conveniences. It is useful to have jealous rivals on the watch to expose jobs and to detect flagrant incapacity. The nation is, for the present, well content with it, and has shown by the late elections a determination that

it shall be preserved. Yet, if the Radicals are right, party Government is near its end. They tell us that although they have been themselves defeated, their principles have not been defeated. There is now, they say, no real difference between Conservative and Whig. No one proposes to undo the past. Whoever governs England must govern in the same spirit and on the same lines of progress. If this be true, their victory has been too complete, and they have destroyed their own idol. Disagreement as to the mere rate with which changes shall be carried on will not suffice to maintain two parties in the House of Commons. If Radical principles have finally prevailed, they will not long be left to be administered by Conservatives. The present Conservative leaders may retain an attitude of resistance during their own lives, but they will find no successors to prolong a hopeless struggle for a lost cause. Talent, energy, and ambition will choose the side on which a successful career is possible. The Constitution will silently change its character. There will be no longer an opposition capable of undertaking the management of the country; and, according to Mr. Gladstone's theory, the few forlorn defenders of the old ways will not be even justified in resisting in detail the dominant faction. Their functions will be over. The

constituencies may now and then have their intervals of impatience; the party chiefs for the moment may be unpopular; the country may again wish, as it did last February, for a change of men; but the men will not be found; the materials for a Conservative Government will no longer exist.

Such a time may come. Popular governments have hitherto uniformly glided into democracies, and democracies as uniformly perish of their own excess. If they escape a violent end by faction, they die of a disease which they cannot escape. Men are made by nature unequal. It is vain, therefore, to treat them as if they were equal. The able and energetic insist on gaining an outward position which shall distinguish them from their fellows. Under democracies the old notes of distinction are abolished. Equality is too jealous to allow differences of rank and power, and differences of wealth alone remain. The pursuit of wealth becomes thus the predominant passion, degrades the national character, raises to eminence the least worthy of elevation, corrupts those who obtain it by luxury, stimulates a false and unworthy ambition in those who aspire to it, and having inverted society, lifts to the top the vulgar and commonplace, and flings the worth and intellect into the dust-heap. Finally, democracy itself is over-

thrown by the nature which it has insisted on defying.

To this end England may, perhaps, be moving. All human things pass away, and the British Constitution will pass away among them.

Too well I know the day will be when sacred Troy will fall.

If it is true that all possible Cabinets are now agreed in principle, that one Prime Minister must follow the track of another, and pursue the same ends, the consummation may be nearer than we believe.

Let us look, then, at the principles to which, on this hypothesis, we are committed. The glory of modern English politics, we are told, is Progress: a good word, but somewhat vague. We are all progressing—up hill or down, growing or decaying. Progress, however, we are told, means growth. We are growing, of course. Who can doubt it? Look at England before the Reform Bill, and look at it now; its population almost doubled, its commerce quadrupled; every individual in the kingdom lifted to a higher level of comfort and intelligence—the speed quickening every year; the advance so enormous, the increase so splendid, that language turns to rhetoric in describing it. Where there is rapid increase of velocity it is usually a sign that the train has reached the level, or perhaps is on a slight decline.

Up-hill motion is usually slow with more things than locomotives. The question is not of the results of progress—good or bad—but of the means by which they are brought about. What is the line of action which the modern statesman is hereafter inevitably to follow? It may be described briefly as what sailors used to call sawing through the bulkheads. Slavers chased by the English cruisers used to cut through their own timbers. The vessel being able to work more freely, gained speed, and while she was running before the wind was in no particular danger. If the weather changed and she was met by a head gale, she went down, crew and cargo. The great Liberal measures of the last forty years have been intended, all of them, to increase individual liberty, to abolish artificial restraint, interference of authority, and privilege of class or institution. It has been assumed that the productive energy of the nation then only shows what it is capable of, when each person is left as far as possible his own master, free to choose his own career for himself, free to use his own faculties to his own best advantage; flung on his own resources, to sink or swim, and left to find the place for himself which belongs to his character and capabilities.

Thus the work of the Liberal statesman has been

chiefly destructive. England in past generations cared for other things more than money, and did not believe that the chief end of man was the development of 'productive energy.' The English Constitution had been directed rather towards training the character of the English people than to generating wealth. The powers in the State were mainly held by the owners of the land. Trade was controlled by corporations and companies. The Established Church, after it lost the power to prohibit schism, was still able to punish it by disabilities. It was supposed that men were the better for being governed, if they were not to be run away with by folly and knavery. Landlords, however, became unjust and tyrannical; trade companies were avaricious; the Established Church became indolent and corrupt. Privilege, it was said, had answered no end but the oppression of the many and the deterioration of the few whom it was designed to benefit. The power was thus transferred to the people; privilege was swept away, and trade and religion were set free. The public service has been popularised; the dependence of man on man has been abolished wherever the knife could reach to cut the strings. Sham governors have been abolished, and have gone the way belonging to them; and there has grown up a corresponding

political philosophy that we do not need authority at all.

In fact, the paternal theory has been perceived to be a cheat. Every man and every body of men consider only their interests, and one therefore cannot be trusted with power over another. Birth, fortune, intellect, education may challenge pre-eminence, but they confer no real right to it. Where all are selfish, the sage is no better than the fool, and only rather more dangerous. The State exists for the equal benefit of all. All classes best understand what is to their own advantage, and are best able to take care of themselves. Power must be evenly divided; and when equality of power has been fairly achieved, a better world may be looked for from the free efforts of each individual to raise his own condition than from the attempts at guidance by the most far-sighted statesman that ever lived. In a perfect community, liberty would be complete. Every one would do as he pleased. Human nature is for the present unequal to the realisation of the ideal. Ferocity and knavery are not yet extinguished, and the policeman remains a necessity. But interference must be limited to the coarser and grosser crimes. If Liberal Governments have consented to protect factory children, and punish adulteration and false weights, they have con-

sented under protest. In dealings between man and man the true maxim is *caveat emptor*. Every one should make his own bargain, and the less the State meddles with him the better.

Fortune has been kind to this daring school of politicians. They have fallen on peculiar times, and they can claim for their system a certain appearance of success.

Subjects of paramount consequence to our fathers have become to us of little interest or none. We no longer go to war for rival dynasties, and we leave doctrinal quarrels to the press and the pulpit. The decline of vitality in theology has turned intellect upon physical science, and the results have been mechanical discoveries which have multiplied suddenly a hundredfold the productive strength of mankind. Peace, scarcely broken for half a century, has given an unprecedented opportunity to commerce, while steam ships and railways have opened the still unpeopled half of the globe to enterprise and occupation. There has thus been elbow-room to try new experiments. When wealth has been increasing faster than population, it may be scrambled for without immediately disastrous consequences. But the globe is a small place after all. Population treads on the heels of production, and soon overtakes it. Po-

litical troubles may again interfere with emigration If no more political troubles come to disturb us, the area of soil on which the European races can settle profitably will be filled perhaps in a couple of centuries. The question rises, therefore, whether old problems will not return in the old form, and whether the final secret for the management of mankind has yet been discovered. The labouring man demands equitable wages. The political economist answers that there is no such thing as equitable wages. Labour is worth what it will fetch in the market, and what it will fetch in the market depends on the supply. What would have become of England and Ireland on this principle had steam not been invented, and had the New World provided no room for emigrants? Left to the higgling of the market, with employers of all kinds looking in strict economic orthodoxy to their own pockets, what would have been the condition of the people? Wages must have fallen in the struggle for existence till they reached starvation point. If the principle of non-interference had been still adhered to, half the children that were born would have died for want of food. Liberty to the English and Irish workman would have meant liberty to choose between a life of abject and hopeless misery or an immediate end by starvation.

The country would have been in the condition in which the late Mr. Augustus Smith found the Scilly Isles when he came into possession of them forty years ago. The population of Scilly was too dense for the means of subsistence. Liberty was perfect. Untaught, ungoverned, the people were free as air to think and act at their own wills, but they dragged out their lives in want and misery. The inhabitants of Scilly are now better housed, better fed and clothed, better educated, better conditioned in all senses than any equal number of persons who can be found on an equal area of British soil. The liberty was curtailed on many sides. Mr. Smith was strictly just, but also peremptory and determined. When he saw that certain things ought to be done, he gave his orders and his orders were obeyed. Yet strange to say the people did not degenerate under authority. Let the enlightened Liberal who supposes that they must have lost their manhood and become mean and cringing, ask the captains of the ocean steamers for an account of the Scilly pilots, or read in the lifeboat reports the exploits of the Scilly fishermen who were bred in Mr. Smith's schools.

All England would have been driven back ere this to analogous authoritative methods, but for special circumstances which are necessarily temporary.

Let us look at another instance. If the laws of political economy are laws of nature, they are as true for Asia as for Europe.

The population of the Indian Peninsula before Great Britain took charge of it was kept within limits by war, famines, oppression, and organised crime. Life had no sacredness in those teeming countries, and human creatures were swept away in masses like weeds. English rule has kept the peace, has abolished Thugs and child-murder, has protected Ryots against the owners of the soil, has made existence on every side more easy. The 190,000,000, which at the beginning of the century occupied the provinces which now form our Indian Empire and its dependencies, have grown in consequence to 250,000,000. The native manufactures have perished under British competition. The people depend entirely upon agriculture, and their number has reached the limit which the land can support even in favourable seasons. Famines thus recur on an ever-increasing scale, and we are confronted with an appalling problem. The laws of nature, as they are called, give their own answer. Sufficient food is not provided, and the superfluous members must die. The economist will say they ought not to have been there Agreed! but what is to prevent them? So

long as *laissez-faire* is the rule, there they will be, and if nature is to rule, nature must rule altogether The economist, who has the courage of his opinions, will say, let them die, and let the survivors learn prudence in suffering. To feed them at the cost of the State is to encourage the unthrifty at the expense of the industrious and provident. To do this at all is unjust, to do it permanently is impossible. A collapse must come at last, and it will be worse in the end than if we had never interfered.

Humanity replies to these objections that to leave millions of the Queen's subjects to die of hunger is equally impossible; at all risks and costs starving people must be fed. But humanity must revise its political philosophy, or it will never solve the Sphinx's riddle. There are but two remedies for an excess of population as great as that which now confronts us in India. If we are to find food for the people in famine time, we must extend our authority, or else we must look through our fingers while ancient methods come back into use for preventing a redundant population; artificial means will be employed to prevent children being born, or they will be destroyed deliberately as they have been for ages destroyed in China.

What is now true of India will be true of all the

world at no very distant time. The creed of *laissez-faire* is therefore no exposition of eternal principles, but an accident of the age—a bubble floating upon the river of time. Liberalism is powerful to destroy. It has not yet shown that it has grasped any true and living principle; and if England is irrevocably committed to it, so much the worse for England.

Perhaps analogies may help us. What, let us ask, is the constitution of an army—such an army as a great country can rely on for protection? It exists by discipline, by strict rule and just gradation. The rank and file look to their petty officers, the petty officers to their regimental officers, the regimental officers to the colonel, the colonel to the general of the division, the general of the division to the commander-in-chief. Beyond the limits of his work each man may have his small range of independence; but so far as duty reaches, he is the mere instrument of the will of his superiors. Is the good soldier therefore discontented? Does he complain when ordered into danger, that his particular interests have not been consulted, or that his particular opinion has not been sufficiently attended to? Is he a slave, has he forfeited his manhood, because he is bound to obey his superiors, and has no voice, direct or indirect, in determining what his orders are

to be? The more strict the discipline, provided it is just and equal, the more happy, the more brave, the more steady is every individual soldier; the better is the army itself for the purpose for which it is intended. Each man is free, because he has relinquished his freedom in the service of his country He is free not in the sense of the demagogue. He is free in the sense that the Christian is free when most a servant of his Master in Heaven. Reverse the process. Introduce into the ranks the liberty of politicians. Give each soldier a vote, let him choose his own officers; let the army be divided into two portions, each with a chief at its head, whose business when his friends are in a minority shall be to denounce his rival as incapable, to thwart his measures, to embarrass his administration, to persuade the troops that he and not the other is the only person who can lead them to victory; to tell the privates that they are unworthy of the name of men if they obey commands on which they have not been consulted, and which a majority of themselves have not approved,—what will ensue? Infallibly mutiny and discontent will ensue, and utter and immediate ruin. Yet these same principles applied politically, are expected to generate loyalty and order, to elevate character, and to promote universal good-will. A

nation is not an army, it is said. True—but it is an association of human beings, and it is at least strange that in different combinations of the same material the same methods should produce results so opposite. If the analogy of an army is inappropriate, consider any other undertaking in which a number of persons are associated. Will the house of business prosper when the merchant or manufacturer must consult his clerks and his workmen, when the vacant places in the counting-house must be filled by competition, when the employer may embark in no enterprise until he has first laid his plans before his subordinates and obtained their consent? Will a farm prosper where the labourers sit in judgment on the rotation of the crops, the qualities of the cattle, the scientific manures, and the capabilities of the soil? Will a ship find its way to port, if, when the storm comes, the seamen may depose their captain and direct the course for the pilot—if science and skill are to be overborne by the combined voices of ignorance, and fear, and conceit? The seamen themselves would not covet a liberty which would destroy them. A crew for a ship so conducted could only be found in a lunatic asylum.

But the illustrations are nonsense, we are told impatiently. A nation is no more a ship or a house

of business than it is an army. No doubt. But ships and houses of business imply combinations of men; and, wherever men combine for a common purpose, the same necessity reveals itself for command and obedience. What, after all, according to the Liberal theory, is a nation? The Liberal answers that a nation is an aggregate of individuals, brought together within certain local limits, by birth or accident, with no organic relations one to another. They have each their varied aims and varied occupations. Some move upon lines of their own, and are responsible only to themselves. Some form into professions, some hire themselves out for special purposes, and submit to rules which they must obey so long as they retain the benefit of their engagements. Among themselves their interests are not identical; they are more often antagonistic. Being confined to the same locality, it is their common concern to defend themselves against foreign enemies, to preserve internal peace, to prohibit violence, and enforce contracts. Outside these narrow limits each person is the only proper judge of his own concerns. Each has an indefeasible right to his own opinion, to the disposal of his own time, his own talents, his own property, and, since some kind of authority cannot be wholly dispensed with, to a voice in the formation and limitation of it.

We talk and think upon the surface. Few of us examine the major premises of half our conclusions. Yet a principle of this kind lies unavowed at the bottom of the popular political philosophy. Look at our colonial policy. Emigrants leave our shores annually in hundreds of thousands. We allow them, we encourage them, to go; but we are ostentatiously indifferent whether they choose their new home within our own dominions or pass under an alien flag. The word allegiance has lost its meaning. Our colonies themselves are behind the age, and profess an old-fashioned loyalty. But they are weak. They entail responsibility, and a little trouble. They are in another locality, and locality is the only bond which is now understood to hold men legitimately together. We tell them, therefore, that we do not want their loyalty, and do not believe in it. Their duty is to themselves. We expect nothing of them, and in return we require them to expect nothing from us.

The argument seems satisfactory so long as the conclusions are those at which we desire to arrive. But how if it is applied nearer at home? If Canada has a right to independence, why is it to be refused to Ireland? Why may not Scotland ask for it? or Wales, or Cornwall, or Devonshire? We may tell

the Irish independence will be of no use to them. They may answer they are the best judges of that themselves. We may appeal to our corporate necessities. We may say it is not the interest of the majority in these islands to permit secession within their limits. But who is to judge of the limits within which majorities are to be counted? And if the corporate nationality of Great Britain and Ireland together has a right to coerce the separatist tendencies of a local majority in Ireland alone, why may it not, if it so please, interfere with freedom in other directions precisely as far as experience shows that the nationality will gain coherence by it? The same mass of iron may be in the condition of a heap of dust, each particle separate from the rest, and the whole held together in a box, or it may be in the condition of solid metal, in tenacious and indestructible cohesion. In the state of dust it is useless for any common purpose. Each granule is emancipated from its fellow, gravitates into its place by its own tiny tendencies, and, if enjoying liberty, falls an easy prey to the vapours which are on the watch to devour it. In the solid state, the same iron may become a sword, a plough, a rifle. It is available for the million purposes of science and art. It will last as many centuries as its atoms would have con-

tinued for days. The atom before it can endure must part with its independence, must consent to be sacrificed in the furnace to the common good. It becomes useful as it ceases to have individual aims of its own; as it loses the freedom of the politician and accepts the freedom of the soldier.

It is with a man as it is with the iron atom. It is only in permanent combination that human beings develop their finest qualities. If the obscure and intricate existence of man in this planet has any meaning at all, he is placed here as in a training-school for his character; and, paradox though it sound, those individuals become personally the greatest who most lose their individuality; who form a part of some noble institution, and whose personal nature is elevated by association with something greater than itself. Wisdom, authority, and justice, these three form the conditions under which men can live and work harmoniously together, and grow each by himself to the highest perfection possible to him. Justice without wisdom is impossible. Authority without justice is most accursed of all things as the perversion of the best. In combination, they are the three pillars of social life, from its first elements in the family to the finished unity of an Imperial State. We talk, not in metaphor, of the body

politic, and to the body politic alone belongs complete freedom. The units composing it are free in the freedom of the body. If they seek a separate freedom of their own, they can obtain it only by degradation. Goethe, contemplating somewhere the human hand, observes how the monads composing it have sacrificed themselves or been sacrificed in perfecting its organisation. Each finger-joint, for instance, might conceivably have had a separate existence, and have fluttered as a butterfly in uncontrolled and vagrant liberty. Have the monads gained or lost in the restraint which had elevated them into being the servants of a servant, and incorporated them in this delicate instrument of human skill? Nature has so appointed their destiny, and the monads loyally acquiesce; they accept their functions, and claim nothing save their share of vital sustenance to keep them in condition for their work. As the unknown force seizes, fashions, and subordinates the elements which form the body of a man, so the genius of the State gathers up the human units, co-ordinates them in villages and towns, educates them in schools and colleges, purifies their lower instincts, by leading them through religion into a recognition of their higher destiny and of the obligations attaching to it, and then distributes them

among the trades and professions which are the beaten highways of practical life. The tissue of the body perishes hourly, and is hourly renewed. The individuals die, but the State has its own life independent of them; as one falls another takes its place; the functions continue unimpaired so long as the monads remain loyal. When the monads begin to mutiny and clamour for their rights and demand liberty, then, and not till then, dissolution begins.

This is the ancient notion of a community, which regards it not as an aggregate of dust, but as a compact and organised being; and out of this notion to it grow the virtues which Englishmen used most to admire—patriotism, loyalty, fidelity, self-forgetfulness, and sense of duty. The sense of what is due of a man's self—his rights, as he calls them—is as conspicuously absent. The prevailing sentiment is distrust of change, adherence to customs and ancient ways, reverence at all times for authority, the authority of persons, and the authority of established institutions. Hence arises the spirit which we call Conservative; and were institutions never degenerate, were persons in authority always those who deserved to hold authority, were the life of man as stationary as the lives of animals, of which a thousand generations may follow each other, and each reproduce the

one preceding without advance or change, then we should all be Conservatives. While life, however, depends on organisation, all organised bodies are in a state of growth and decay. The body of a man sickens. He requires the physician, or perhaps the surgeon. The institutions of a State grow rusty, or are corrupted from their original purpose. Persons in authority abuse their station for their private advantage. In the best of us there is a baser nature on the watch to betray us. Privilege, conferred for some noble end, becomes a great deal too often an excuse for tyranny, exaction, or indolence; and we call in the Reformer and the Radical.

But let us look closer at the meaning of Conservatism. Two tendencies are for ever at work wherever men are found, one binding them together, the other separating them. Necessity compels them to form into societies. Personal ambition, personal desire, set them one against the other. As members of society, their interest is co-operation; as individuals, they are each other's enemies; or, if not enemies, at least they are competitors with each other. They seek the same objects, and the objects which they seek being limited in quantity, they cannot all possess them. But the mischiefs to the majority of unrestricted competition are greater than the possible advantages of

the few. We find ourselves placed in the earth in numbers perpetually increasing. We can live only by extracting out of the soil the means of subsistence, and the productiveness of work increases in a geometrical ratio with combination among the workers. The family, the unit of society, holds together by natural instinct. The animals pair for a season, and fling off their offspring when old enough to find their own food. Civilised men and women pair for life, and the mutual obligations of parents and children continue till death divides them. Blood relationship extends the circle. Where kindred ends convenience begins. Communities form for mutual defence and assistance, and then expand and grow into States and nations. But men cannot live together without laws Laws require force to make them respected, and force implies a government. Talent, industry, intellectual capability, strength of mind and body are distributed unequally. There is a permanent idle class who hate work, and hunger infinitely for pleasure. Fools work amiss, and, if unguided, do more harm than good. Idleness breeds crime, and for crime there must be punishment. If work is to be productive, the wise must direct and the fool must obey ; and as the business of life cannot stand still till the fool is convinced of his folly by argument, direction must take the form

of command. Thus gradually the continent of human occupation is trodden into roads, which experience proves to lead most directly to the desired end. Experience teaches slowly, and at the cost of mistakes. The roads are at first rude, mere tracks of custom, and are improved as knowledge increases; but at any given time the beaten track is safer for the multitude than any independent course which originality may strike out for itself; and if a person who fancies that he is not one of the multitude chooses to act in another direction, he is regarded with natural distrust. In one instance in a thousand he may be right, and if he has courage to persevere he will earn an exceptional place for himself in the honour of his kind. But the presumption is against him, and penalties are fitly imposed on eccentricity in proportion to the disturbance which it threatens.

As it has been with practice, so it has been with opinion. Surrounded by invisible forces, their destination and their origin alike concealed behind a veil, yet liable at any moment to accidents by which their lives, their fortunes, their happiness might be affected for good or ill, men began early to speculate on the nature of the powers which seemed to envelope their existence. They gave the rein to their fears and to their fancy. They filled the darkness with

imaginary beings, which in general were but the projections of their own shadows upon the mist: and falling down before the creatures of their imagination they built temples to them, constituted themselves the champions of their idols' honour, and fought and destroyed each other for their glory. Ignorance is the dominion of absurdity. Fear is the parent of cruelty. Ignorance and fear combined have made the religious annals of mankind the most hideous chapters in history. Lust, avarice, ambition, revenge, have added each its terrible contribution to the general misery. But these passions have their definite objects, and can, in some sort, be guarded against. The forms assumed by superstition are incalculable. The most supreme absurdity it can hallow into mystery. The most fiendish atrocity it can metamorphose into the service of a god, and make conscience the willing slave of its own passions.

Therefore on this side also it was soon found necessary to restrain the licence of speculation, and the best conclusions which wise men could arrive at on these dark questions were early digested into form, and prescribed as a limit to extravagance. State religions, as they come down to us, appear childish, ridiculous, and often horrid. The best that can be said for them is that they are less childish and less

horrid than individuals at the same epoch would have devised for themselves. The world of outward experience has been conquered slowly and with difficulty. The invisible world lies beyond experience; where experience ceases to be tangible, emotion and conjecture hold their own with exceptional tenacity, and intellect and observation have been comparatively powerless to check them. Something, however, has been done, and something continues to be done, without which our religious insanities would rapidly make us intolerable to each other. From the earliest recorded times the lawgivers have endeavoured to connect the service of the gods with moral duty, as duty has been from time to time understood. Moral duty standing at length on a ground of its own, they content themselves with preventing men from killing one another in the name of religion. They have established, so far as the law can be a guide, that differences of opinion upon subjects on which all men are equally ignorant shall not be punished as crimes. If the advocates of different creeds continue to hate each other, the law has compelled the more intolerant to confess that the hatred shall not be carried into act. This is called religious liberty, and by some religious indifference. It may be said rather that by keeping steadily before it the principles of justice, the law has become the

witness and the sanction of the highest religion yet attained, or perhaps attainable, by man, that the service of God is obedience to the moral commandments.

Thus, the domain of man's activity, practical and speculative, has been mapped out through a series of ages. His so-called natural rights to the free disposition of himself have submitted to the restraint of rules which practice has proved to be useful. So the work of individuals becomes valuable to the community, being guided by intelligence and custom; and thus—as a higher end, in which lies the true meaning of life—the individual character becomes elevated into something greater than itself by accepting a share in the larger life of the community to which it belongs. Broad directions become expressed in laws. Where law cannot work, custom begins; and customs form into institutions. The more institutions any nation possesses, so long as the institutions are wise in themselves and wisely administered, the more healthy and vigorous such a nation will be, for the larger portion of the activity of its members will be protected from the erratic inclinations of selfishness and folly. All great nations, therefore, prize and foster their institutions. The surest sign that States are strong and growing is when the organic and controlling fibre is pushing further and further,

and taking stronger and more varied hold; just as, on the other hand, it is a sign of the approaching end when institutions begin to disintegrate, and the monads recover control of their own motions. If the nation is to be great and free, the monads must be great and free as parts of it, not as independent of it. In a healthy community the normal spirit will be the spirit of conservatism, the spirit of order, the spirit of submission to established rule and custom.

Another symptom, therefore, in all noble peoples is to admire, and perhaps exaggerate, the greatness of the past. Nothing is more curious than to observe the difference of attitude in the Radical and Conservative to what is called 'the wisdom of our ancestors.' The Conservative sees in an institution which has descended through a series of generations an organisation which has borne the test of time, which has taken root and grown, and by living and working has proved its suitableness to the exigencies of society. The theoretic critic may detect mischief in it. He may assure himself that it ought to create only evil. Facts may be wiser than he. If any long-existing institution had not been really useful, it would not have forced its way into being; and though the critic may measure the consequences of its presence, he cannot tell what will happen when it is

gone. The life of the nation may, for all that he knows, be bound up in the life of its institution. A limb may be diseased, but a wise physician will not cut it off till he has tried whether it cannot be restored to vigour by improving the general health. The patient may die under the operation; if he survive it, he is thenceforward but half his former self, or his constitution may be irreparably injured.

What the limbs are to the body institutions are to the body politic, and ought to be meddled with only at the last extremity, when it has been proved beyond possibility of doubt that unless they are removed the State must die. Men look on the State as a machine with which they may try experiments. If the experiments fail, they suppose that they can replace things as they were. An institution which has been brought to maturity in a thousand years may be cut down by a quack in a single session of Parliament, but he can no more restore it than the woodman can replace the fallen oak. It seems a fine thing, a great achievement, to cut down a tree—a small effort produces a vast effect, and surrounding fools clamour and applaud. For the moment a few strokes of the axe seem an operation as admirable as the action of the organic forces which out of a small acorn, working silently through a series of ages, produced the tree and set

it in its place. Should it be found afterwards that the mischief charged against it continued, and was due to another cause, should other evils undreamt of appear when it is gone to have been created by its removal, the glory of the destroyer, whether woodman or reforming Radical, will be as short-lived as it has been cheaply gained.

'Our fathers that had more wit and wisdom than we' was a common saying in England in the era of Shakespeare. *Antiquitas sæculi juventus mundi* is the favourite expression now. The argument from antiquity is reviled as the absurdest of fallacies; the further back an opinion or a custom can be traced the clearer is said to be the proof that it originated in the infancy of knowledge. The length of its duration is regarded as in itself a proof of its unsuitableness for modern necessities. Our fathers, the Reformer says, were very well in their time. Had they possessed our advantages they might have been as good as ourselves. But each generation, from the fresh accumulation of experience and the fresh development of science, is necessarily superior to its predecessor. It would be ridiculous affectation in us to pretend to think ourselves inferior to the English of Elizabeth or Cromwell. 'The present age,' said the most distinguished of the Tractarians, unconscious that he was the mouth-

piece of the spirit which he most dreaded and most despised, 'requires something deeper and truer than satisfied the last century.' Old things are passing away; opinions, habits, practices, modes of action and modes of thought, all are to be made new. When the nation has been chopped in pieces and flung into the cauldron, the revolutionary enchantress will mutter a spell over it from the Gospel of Progress, and it is to spring to life again in the elasticity of recovered youth. So the Radical prophesies. He sees only in the traditions of the past the relics of a barbarous age, when the strong tyrannised over the weak and shaped the Constitution of their country to enable them to maintain for ever a rule of injustice. The few, he considers, then shared the wealth and power among themselves, and left the many to toil and hunger. The laws were contrived to perpetuate inequality of rank, and along with it inequality of happiness. Every political institution was invented or perverted to benefit the privileged orders at the poor man's cost, while the Church, which should have been his champion, made a league with his oppressors, promised him relief in another world, and bade him be content for the present in the state of life to which God had called him. The higher classes might be called rulers: they ruled by a code from which justice

had been obliterated. The poor man would continue to be trodden upon till the monopolists of the earth were made to fear him, and therefore it was necessary to take their power from them and give a share of it to the enslaved millions. They might keep their wealth and continue, if they pleased, to live in idleness and luxury; but others, not they, must have charge of the laws, and the people must be restored to the natural independence which had been filched from them.

So in all ages the advocates of popular rights have declaimed against authoritative government, and, unfortunately, very often with the truth essentially on their side. Rulers who are not responsible to the people are terribly apt to forget that they have duties towards them; unless they are men of piety, unless they really believe that they have to answer to God Almighty, if not to man, they always will forget it; and when religion degenerates into a creed or a ritual, they have never long resisted the temptation to abuse power. Men born to great place, and surrounded from their cradles with luxury and splendour, come soon to believe that they are made of other clay than the common herd—that they are appointed by nature to enjoyment, while others are appointed to toil, and that it is fit and right to administer the affairs of mankind on these

principles. Radical reformers are indispensable persons—some one must be found to tell these high persons unpalatable truths—to tell them that, on this hypothesis, they are a burden upon the earth, and had better take themselves away. Power they might have had and kept, had they used it for the common good; but if the common good is forgotten, and wealth, office, dignity are to be made the appanage of great families, and their dependents and kindred, then they are the drones of the hive, fit only to be led in custody to the doors; to be there turned adrift, and told to return at their peril. The misfortune is that it has been left so generally to enemies to remind rulers of truths which they should have been the first to remember for themselves. The State is split in two. Parties form which have an interest of their own beyond the interest of the community. The Conservatives, to prevent the alienation of their friends, defend the indefensible, and cling obstinately to the abuses which they ought to abhor; while the Radicals invent new theories of Government, and fly passionately at principles which lie at the root of social organisation. The more sober-minded on either side rely on their antagonists to correct the excesses of their own extravagance; yet instead of acting as a check, each section, by its one-sidedness,

excites and justifies the violence of the other. The result is a waste of power in a perpetual battle; the practical ability of statesmen is neutralised for all purposes of guidance and authority by their mutual antagonism, the State itself meanwhile drifting before the prevailing wind.

Growth, it must be repeated, is slow, destruction rapid. Destruction long continued finds nothing more to destroy, and the nation and its Radical champions come to an end together. Conservatism is the very genius of life; but Conservatism is only possible when the vital forces, as in animals and plants, provide in themselves for the continual removal of decaying or vitiated substances, and with perpetual effort revive and renew their organic energy. In the oblivion by ruling powers of half their obligations or the deliberate transfer of them to their Radical antagonists lies the secret of national decrepitude. Kings lost their power when they tired of being ministers of the law, and aspired to be its masters. The Guilds fell when the rules of trade were no longer safe in their hands. The Catholic Church fell when its sacred ordinances were prostituted to fill the pockets of monks and bishops. The Peerage will fall, and the system of landed inheritance will fall; property itself will fall, and all else

which has given England coherence and stability, if the inheritors of great names and the owners of enormous wealth suppose that these high privileges have been awarded them that they may have palaces in town and country, and lounge out their existence among pleasures which, from their abundance, have lost the power to please. Institutions cannot be maintained which fulfil no wholesome purpose. Great persons may choose between luxury and power. Both they cannot have. The English aristocracy might recover their ascendency to-morrow were they to become Spartan in their private habits.

In England, before the Long Parliament, political liberty in its modern sense was unknown. The virtual rulers of the people were the nobility and gentry, yet a gentry and a nobility who were scarcely more distinguished in their personal habits of life from their servants and dependents than their ancestors in the German forests who were the admiration of the Roman historian.[1]

The Earl and Countess of Northumberland, in Henry VII.'s time, breakfasted, at six in the morn-

[1] 'In omni domo nudi ac sordidi; in hos artus, in hæc corpora, quæ miramur, excrescunt. Sua quemque mater uberibus alit nec ancillis ac nutricibus delegantur. Dominum ac servum nullis educationis deliciis dignoscas. Inter eadem pecora, in eadem humo degunt, donec ætas separet ingenuos, virtus agnoscat.'—Tacit., *Germania*, 20.

ing, on a hunch of bread, a cold round of salt beef, and a black jack of claret. There are more appliances for easy living in the housekeeper's room in a modern English mansion than Elizabeth herself ever saw, or would have cared to see. As political inequalities have been filled in, the social gulf has widened. The more the people were admitted to share in the power of the State, the better, we were assured, would become the feeling between classes. In the fifteenth century England was torn in pieces by a furious civil war. The cause of it was a division among the nobles as to the sovereign to whom their loyalty was due. The armies on both sides were the tenants and serfs of the nobles themselves. To them it signified not the breadth of a hair whether they were reigned over by an Edward or a Henry; yet they went willingly into that desperate and bloody conflict from no other motive than personal devotion to their chiefs. We may congratulate ourselves that we have escaped the possibility of another edition of the Wars of the Roses. The Durham colliers or the Staffordshire iron-workers would scarcely take the field at the invitation of Lord Londonderry or Lord Dudley. The mill-owners of Manchester do not expect the factory hands even to touch their hats to them in the streets. The agricultural labourers,

finding that they might wait for justice till doomsday if they trusted to their landlords, have shaken themselves clear of the traditions of dependence. The change may be good in itself, but it does not indicate an increasing attachment between class and class; and the ease with which those who, when they are dissatisfied with their progress at home, transfer their allegiance to America, and the acquiescence and approbation with which the abandonment of their nationality is regarded, indicate as little an increased attachment to their country in the constituents of the British Empire.

The grounds for dissatisfaction with the existing management of things were, forty years ago, so many and so serious that a period of reform was inevitable, and the English people, naturally enough, took the reformers at their word, and really believed that a new era was opening upon them. For some time symptoms have appeared of a change of feeling, —a doubt whether the progress of which we hear so much is progress in a safe direction. They have desired, at all events, to stand still for a while and survey their situation. The Liberal camp were showing signs, in 1867, of serious disorganisation. Mr. Gladstone discerned in the Irish Church a last means of re-uniting his followers, and the measures

for the pacification of Ireland having been duly passed, and the misgivings of the country having been rather increased than diminished by the result, Mr. Gladstone has been dismissed; his party has collapsed, and the Conservatives, after a practical eclipse of almost half a century, have been entrusted, once more, with the charge of the State.

Is it but a pause in the down-hill road from mere passing weariness? Is it that the English have begun again to understand that there are two kinds of liberty—the liberty of anarchy, which is death, and the true liberty, which alone is worth a wise man's caring for, the liberty which is made possible by obedience to rational authority? In either case the attack will be renewed, and the respite will be brief. If the reaction has honest purpose in it, we shall see no more attempts at tinkering the Constitution. Constitutions are but means to ends. The people of England have asked for better food, better clothes, better houses, better education, a fairer share of the wealth which they have helped to produce. Our cunning millionnaires have replied, 'We cannot give you what you call a fair share of our profits. We will give you votes instead, votes which will cost us nothing, and which we know very well how to control.' This is not a reform to which a Conserva-

tive minister should condescend. Counterfeit coin of this kind he may well leave to the opposite party. His chief business at present is reform of another kind — a reform of his own followers. If he can carry the aristocracy with him in passing measures for the general advantage, which shall have some relish in them of self-sacrifice; if he can persuade them that in return for their splendid inheritances they owe a debt to the people which they are ready to recognise and pay, the House of Lords may again become a reality, and wrest from its rival some share of the power which has passed away from it.

If this be impossible, if men of wealth and rank continue to accept one side of the political economist's creed, attend exclusively to their own interests, and do as they will with their own; if their sublime function is to fritter themselves away in magnificent indolence, as Mr. Disraeli describes them in *Lothair*, then the present return to Conservatism is but an eddy in the stream. There is no conserving what does not deserve to be conserved. From the noble Lords, if from any one, we have a right to expect a noble example. If it be vain to expect that in any class high motives can be looked to as a motive force in the community, then, indeed, we must resign ourselves to the democratic current. Each human being

among us will then set himself with an undivided heart to make money and spend it as he pleases. All of us being on the same moral level, all have equal rights, all will obtain an equal share in political power, and in a little while, distinctions of wealth being the most odious of all distinctions, the great estates will follow with the rest. The Democratic majority will then be supreme. There will be but one political party who will carry out the dissolving programme, till the State is reduced finally to the congregation of self-seeking atoms, which they declare to be its natural state. The Americans are before us on the same road. The English Colonies are treading on the heels of the Americans. The same temper seems to have infected, more or less, all the Western nations; and we may expect that the type of character of which the half-educated middle-class Anglo-Saxon is the best existing representative, will enter before long into complete possession of the inheritance of this planet. I have every respect for my kindred in the New World as well as the Old; but if this is the meaning of 'the progress,' the praise of which is trumpeted out so loudly, the epic of human history will be wound up with the dreariest of farces.

LEAVES FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL.

IN the summer of 1874 I paid a visit to South Africa. Having leisure on my hands, I wished to use it to study the working of an English colony. I had been interested in the exertions of Miss Rye to carry the waifs and strays of our swarming population of children to countries where their chances in after life would be more favourable than here, and I desired to ascertain how far the colonial authorities would be willing to assist in carrying out a systematic emigration of such children on a larger scale. My attention had been drawn especially to South Africa, through what is known as the Langabalele disturbance in Natal, in which two large native tribes had been destroyed. The head of one of them, Langabalele himself, had been tried and condemned by Kafir law, the Governor presiding in the capacity of supreme chief. The proceeding appeared to have been arbi-

trary and violent, and I desired to know the truth about it. I resolved at the same time to extend my tour to the neighbouring republics. Between these republics and the Imperial Government a quarrel had arisen in consequence of the British occupation of the lately discovered Diamond Fields, which had previously formed part of the territory of the Orange Free State. The dispute had interested me from the contradictory statements which I had read about it. I wished to learn the history of the transaction from disinterested parties upon the spot, and to learn especially how far the annexation had been approved by colonial opinion.

The following pages contain extracts from the journal which I carried with me. A few light sketches of the society and the scenery of a country in which England is beginning to be interested, may serve as a relief to the serious subjects with which this volume is chiefly occupied. I leave them almost as they were first written. What merit they possess —if they possess any merit at all—will be due to the freshness of impressions which were noted down as they were formed.[1]

1874, *August* 23.—Left Dartmouth in the 'Walmer

[1] In the following year I went again to the Cape. The present journal refers only to my first experiences.

Castle.' Full complement of passengers. Africanders all, or most of them, with whom I shall in time make acquaintance. Before I left the harbour I was introduced to a Natal judge, who was on his way home. The judge had been out of the colony when Langabalele was tried, but answered readily any questions which I asked. He said that in his opinion there had been no intention of rebellion. It was a mere police case and ought to have been treated so; still, naturally enough, he endeavoured to excuse the authorities. A youth at dinner, reflecting, I suppose, colonial opinion, insisted that but for the timely vigour, &c. which had been displayed all Africa would have been on fire.

August 25.—Weather fine. Sea smooth. Air growing rapidly hot. The passengers with whom I fall into conversation speak of the Kafirs not unkindly. They describe them as having splendid natural qualities, but as being ruined by the mistaken treatment which England insists upon. If the Dutch and the English of the colony were allowed to deal with them in their own way, they conceive that the native character might be really improved; as it is they look to rum and brandy as the probable solution of the problem. If rum and brandy, why not strychnine at once?

August 28.—The judge gives up the Natal affair He say that they are obliged to use the friendly tribes to keep in check the dangerous tribes. The friendly being savages of course do savage things, and if they are punished they will never help us again. The story is now plain enough; it was another Glencoe.

August 29.—Exquisite weather. The sea calm as Torbay in stillest summer. The water violet colour One thinks of Homer's

ἰοείδεα πόντου.

Last night we had a remarkable sunset. The disk, as it touched the horizon, was deep crimson. As the last edge of the rim disappeared there came a flash, lasting for a second, of dazzling green—the creation I suppose of my own eyes. The trades now beginning. The judge and I talk and smoke, and gradually the condition of the colony comes out. Coloured men do not serve on juries in Natal, and the result is what might be expected. He once himself tried a white man who had murdered a Kafir, and was caught red-handed. The jury brought a verdict of not guilty, and the audience in the court cheered. The judge said he could hardly speak for shame. I do not yet make out the Boers, who are described as lazy, indifferent to progress or money-making, thinking

little of politics, and only resenting English interference with them; yet most people to whom I talk seem to agree that in the Orange Free State the natives are better managed than in any other part of Africa. Such a business as that of Langabalele could not possibly have happened there.

August 31.—Yesterday was Sunday; the sky overcast and the air close. The Captain read prayers in the cabin in the morning. In the evening the quarter-deck was cleared for chapel. Lamps were hung under the awning and a Wesleyan 'conducted a service.' Several hymns were sung, 'Oh Paradise! Oh Paradise!' and 'Rock of Ages,' among them. The choir was composed of young ladies, whose week-day performances I had thought vulgar and under-bred. It was strange to observe how completely the vulgarity disappeared under the constraint of forms with which they were unable to take liberties. The sermon reminded me of the motion of a squirrel in a cage: the repetition of a single idea with scarcely a variation of words, without natural beginning and without natural end, and capable, if necessary, of going on for ever.

Sept. 2.—Reached St. Vincent at noon yesterday. The approach to the harbour lies between the islands of St. Vincent and San Antonio. San Antonio is a

mountain ridge, 7000 feet high and thirty miles long, the sloping sides split into chasms, in which, so far as I could see, not so much as a blade of grass was growing. St. Vincent, on the left, is naked rock, sharp, jagged, and precipitous, the highest point of it under 3000 feet. The harbour is land-locked. Talk of the sunny south, the land of cypress and myrtle and orange grove! At St. Vincent grows nothing but a dusky scrub, in a hollow into which the wind has blown the sand. The rest of the island is sterile, stern, and savage. No kindly rain or frost here pulverizes the stone into soil. The peaks stand out sharp, like the teeth of some primeval dragon, huge molars and incisors, with here and there a gap where a tusk has decayed with age. There are no springs, no streams. Throughout the year scarcely a shower falls there, and therefore not a green blade of grass can show itself. The town is a coaling station, much frequented by passing steamers. The inhabitants are chiefly blacks or half-castes, whose business is to prey on visitors. Naked nigger boys swim round the ship diving for sixpences. Black sirens, handsome and immodest, tempt the passengers into the dancing saloons, which are opened when a steamer comes in. What a notion must these wretched creatures have of the outer

world, from the glimpses which they are thus able to get of its passing occupants. I went over the gaol, which is attached to the Governor's house, and the nigger turnkey showed me with a grin a special ward reserved for the English. The talk of the colonists on board ranges between wool, ostrich feathers, and ten per cent. on freightage. Colonial politics they regard as avowedly nothing but a scramble for the plunder of office. They bet every day on the number of the miles which the ship will have run at noon in the past twenty-four hours, and are as eager about it as Yankees.

Sept. 4.—To-day we are exactly under the sun. Fresh stars come into sight every night, and Sirius shines grandly like a planet. I have been feeding hitherto on Greek Plays: this morning I took Homer instead, and the change is from a hothouse to the open air. The Greek dramatists, even Æschylus himself, are burdened with a painful consciousness of the problem of human life, with perplexed theories of Fate and Providence. Homer is fresh, free, and salt as the ocean. Ulysses and Agamemnon are once more living and breathing men. Religion is simple and unconscious, and the Gods, rough and questionable as they may be, are without the malignity of later centuries. Achilles, when he sacrifices the

Trojan youths at the tomb of Patroclus, is rather censured for his cruelty than praised for his devotion. The notion of human sacrifice as a means of propitiating the anger of the Gods must have been imported from Phœnicia, perhaps with the Phœnician alphabet, progress, and the march of intellect!

Sept. 6.—We are now in the south-east trade, the sun to the north of us, and the heat less oppressive. I hear much of the Cape Dutch. The English colonists seem not to like them, and see their characters askew. The judge says a Boer's religion is like the Kafir Obeah. He is afraid of doing wrong, because he expects to be damned for it. Perhaps, substantially, this is the most valuable part of all religions —so long as it is really believed.

Sept. 7.—Sunday, a day of weariness: rest when there has been no toil to rest from—rest only from amusement, and therefore not rest at all. Captain W. read the morning service. The divines (we have two on board) were both sick, and unequal to an evening function. Another ten days ought to bring us to the Cape. The stars are changed. The pole star is under the horizon. Already a new heaven; in a few days there will be a new earth. The sea is no longer violet, but brilliantly transparent bluish green. It

is spring this side of the line. At the Cape I shall find the almonds coming into flower.

Sept. 18.—The south-east trade dead in our teeth. The air grows colder and colder, for a week past we have gone back to our pea-jackets. The sea increases daily and the rolling becomes more violent. This morning three distinct sets of waves, one set from the south-east, in the line of our course, another from the south, another from the south-west. They did not neutralise each other, but continued to propagate themselves, each in their own direction, producing shapes entirely new to me. The cabins are in confusion: books tumbling off the shelves, portmanteaus slipping on the floor, boots and shoes dancing in wild disorder. Every day I grow more convinced that colonial and all other political questions resolve themselves into one: What object do the ruling powers set before themselves? Is it to produce a noble race of men, or is it to produce what they call wealth? If they aim chiefly at the second they will not have the first. Every wise man, whether Solomon or Plato, Horace or Shakespeare, has but one answer on this subject: where your treasure is, there will your heart be. Let wealth be the sublime end of our existence, and no new English nations will be born in the Cape or in Australia. England itself will be a huge graz-

ing farm, managed on economical principles, and the people, however rich they may appear, will be steadily going down to what used to be called the Devil.

Sept. 19.—Four weeks out. Still rolling with a fierce sea and a head wind. I have given up serious books, and have taken instead to *Little Dorrit*. Dickens' wine has an excellent flavour, but it is watered for present consumption, and I doubt if it will keep. Captain W. tells me that with S.E. winds in this latitude, a high barometer indicates that the wind will rise, and that if the mercury reaches 30·2 (it has been standing for the last fortnight at 30·1), I shall see a heavier gale than I have yet experienced in my life.

Sept. 21.—Running into Table Bay. The mountain magnificent, 4000 feet high, and hanging over the town, with cliffs so sheer that a revolver would send a bullet from the edge of the precipice into the principal street.

Sept. 25.—At sea again. The three days, which was all that I could at present afford to Cape Town, have been extremely interesting, and have already opened my eyes to much which I did not anticipate.

The town itself, which was built by the Dutch, is a curious old-fashioned place, with a modern skin imperfectly stretched over it. You see great old

mansions in bad repair, with stiff gardens overrun with weeds, and old gateways flanked by couching lions. The Dutch, among their many merits, introduced pine and oak here. The pine forests now cover the sides of the mountain. The oak grows rapidly to an enormous size, being in leaf for nine months in the year. Everywhere you see the marks of the stiff, stubborn, Calvinistic Holland. The hotel in which I stayed was once the house of some wealthy citizen. The floors upstairs are of stone. The walls are panelled, the ceilings carved. The sash windows are huge, heavy, and close-fitting. The dinner-room is so stiff of aspect that the pert modern waiter seems subdued by the atmosphere of it into old-fashioned politeness. Cape Town has twice had its day of splendour. Once under the Dutch government, and again when it was the sanatorium of Bombay and Bengal, and the East Indian magnates used to come there to recruit their livers. Now, even now, it was a pleasant thing to see the English flag flying over a spot which, whatever might be its fortunes, was still the most important naval station in the world.

Among other persons I called on Mr. Saul Solomon, whom I had often heard of as the advocate of the Exeter Hall policy towards the natives. Nature has been unkind to Mr. Solomon. He is

scarcely taller than Tom Thumb. It is the more honourable to him that, with such disadvantages, he has made himself one of the most useful, as well as one of the most important persons in the Cape colony. The Colonial Parliament and Ministry having approved of the operations in Natal against Langabalele and his tribe, having indeed taken charge of Langabalele as a state prisoner, I thought I should learn from Mr. Solomon what was really to be said in defence of the Natal Government. Mr. Solomon spoke, on the contrary, in terms of the strongest reprobation of what had been done; but he was shy of promising any help in the Cape Parliament should the Imperial Government desire Langabalele to be released. He seemed satisfied to think that the Imperial Government was in a mess, and must get out of it as well as it could. He was cold also about emigration. White and black labourers, he said, never worked well together, and he seemed generally afraid that if the white race became more numerous, the natives might be handled less scrupulously.

The day following I accompanied the still more eminent Mr. —— to his country house near Constantia. The road lay through groves of oak. The house itself is a hundred and fifty years old, and is well built, with large airy rooms, strong, warm, and

enduring. The solidity of everything here contrasts strangely with the showy flimsiness of the mansions run up by contract in more modern settlements. They had no responsible Government when Cape Town was built. What is it which has sent our colonies into so sudden a frenzy for what they call political liberty? The aloe, when it blossoms, leads the infant aloes attached to it to develope too their own aspiring flower-stalk, and the health of neither is much better for the effort. England has blossomed into reform and progress and unexampled prosperity. The colonies have adopted the pattern. They had indeed no choice but to adopt it. For party government once established at home, the colonial patronage would have been appropriated to the promotion of home parliamentary interest. Time will show how far the aloe illustration will hold good. Mr. —— is an extremely interesting person. He drove me through the Constantia country, among pine and oak forests, opening into exquisite vineyards, about the slopes of the great mountain. Leaving the forests, we then struck across the natural plains, clothed with silver trees and sugar bushes, and carpeted with wild heather and wild geraniums, the sea in the distance soft and beautiful as the Mediterranean. The peninsula of Table Mountain, cut off from the rest of

Africa, would certainly make one of the most precious possessions in the world. It could be made impregnable at a moderate expense. It is about the size of Madeira, and of infinite fertility. It contains the only harbour available for ships of war either on the east or west coast for many thousand miles. Whoever holds this peninsula commands the ocean commerce round the Cape. The peninsula commands South Africa, for it commands its harbours. Were England wise in her generation, a line of forts from Table Bay to False Bay would be the northern limit of her Imperial responsibilities.

Mr. ——, unlike Mr. Solomon, entered warmly into the suggestion of an extension to the Cape of Miss Rye's emigration system, and promised his effective co-operation. We talked over possible schemes for the representation of the colonies in the Imperial Legislature. Representation in the House of Commons we agreed to be impossible. There seemed less difficulty with the House of Lords. Distinguished colonial public servants might be nominated for a number of years. A peer for life would probably become a permanent absentee, and being unknown in the colony, would lose its confidence.

Sept. 27.—We arrived yesterday at Port Elizabeth, on Algoa Bay, after a rapid run of thirty-nine

hours, distance 500 miles from Cape Town. Port Elizabeth is a handsome modern town, the chief port of the eastern provinces, lying on an open hill-side as Brighton does. There is no harbour, but the roadstead is sheltered on the dangerous quarter, and is crowded with vessels of all sizes. The loading and discharging is by lighters, and managed as expeditiously as if the ship was in dock. The beach is flat; the available extent of it has been much reduced by an attempted basin, enclosed by wooden piers, which was no sooner made than it filled in with sand. The bales and boxes are landed through the surf on the backs of natives; splendid fellows, with the shape of an Antinous, stark naked, and shining from the water as if they were oiled. The black skin, which is of the texture of hippopotamus hide, seems to answer the purposes of modesty. These fellows earn six shillings a day; they live on one, save the rest, and when they have enough, they go inland, buy cattle, and two or three wives to work for them, and do nothing the rest of their lives. They all have the franchise. I asked one of the members for the town how they managed at election times. "Oh," he said, "we send a few barrels of brandy into the native location." The Port Elizabeth people are as eager as Mr. —— for a child emigration. They say it is the

very best system which could be devised, and in fact is the only one to bring the English population to a level—in numbers—with the Dutch.

Every one here approves of the action of the Natal Government in the Langabalele affair. I am told that if Natal is irritated, it may petition to relinquish the British connection, and to be allowed to join the Free States. I cannot but think that it would have been a wise policy, when the Free States were thrown off, to have attached Natal to them. The object was to limit British responsibilities and to throw an independent community in the way of any further advance into the interior. The Free States without Natal and a seaboard do not answer the purpose. As matters stand, Natal is a danger and a difficulty. We keep troops there, and as long as a single regiment is in Maritzburg the Cape Government will never exert itself to maintain an adequate colonial force. We leave Kafir law standing in Natal, because the Kafirs cannot be governed by the laws of civilised communities. The Governor has the arbitrary powers of supreme chief. But if the possession of these powers tempts him to use them, English opinion is outraged. It would be better to make the natives into serfs under an organised system, with security for property and life, than to give them the

rights of freemen and leave them to be eaten up, as it is called, when public policy pretends that an example is wanted. On the other hand, nothing can be worse than to teach the Kafirs that there is a power behind the colonists on which they can rely if they are mutinous. The normal condition of the country must be the supremacy of the white race in the colony. They alone come in contact with the natives, and they must manage them.

This necessity will become greater if we are to have a confederated South Africa. If we go on with the policy of 1854, if we keep behind the Orange River and refuse to allow an extension of territory into the interior, the native management may be dictated from Downing Street. In a Federal Parliament the Dutch party will be overwhelmingly preponderant. They may wish to extend to the whole country the more severe system which they find to succeed excellently in the Orange Free State, and if we are then to insist on having our way, we shall fall out with the constitution as soon as it is made. If there is to be a British African empire conducted on British principles, it must be governed as India is governed. To attempt it otherwise is to invite certain failure. On the other hand, a confederate and self-governed South African dominion, which was al-

lowed to manage the natives in its own way, would remain, I believe, loyal to the British Crown, and would have no wish to change its flag. The blacks would be controlled, their Kafir law would be abolished, and they would be made to conform to the usages of civilised life. But at any rate there would be no such outrage possible as this affair of Langabalele. To-morrow we start in the 'Florence' steamer for Natal, another 500 miles to the east.

The '*Florence*,' *September* 30, 7 A.M.—Running along the African coast. Yesterday, we called at East London, and lay all day there with a fearful roll discharging cargo. East London lies at the mouth of the Buffalo River, at the most exposed point of the continent. The shore is strewed with the wrecks of miserable vessels which have gone to pieces there. By-and-by I am told that it is to be the finest port in the colony, and so sanguine is the Colonial Government, that extensive railway works are already in progress in connection with it. Inside the river is like the Dart, and is about the same size, with a fair depth of water for a couple of miles. The banks are high and wooded with Mimosa, prickly pear, the giant Euphorbia Candelabra, and other trees which I did not know. The mouth, unfortunately, is at present closed with a sand bar, over which, by watching

our opportunity, the day being exceptionally fine for East London, we contrived to pass in a life-boat. The engineers are hard at work narrowing the entrance, which they conclude that the scour of the tide will then keep open. But the rise and fall even at the springs is only six feet, a small force for so large an enterprise, and the Indian Ocean is a formidable enemy. Mr. Leicester, the chief engineer, is certain of success. I should have felt more sanguine if he had been himself less enthusiastic.

We are now off Kreli's country—independent Kafirland—a strip two hundred miles long, which divides Natal from the Colony. We pass within half a mile of the shore to avoid the current which sets outside steadily to the west. From the sea it seems as if Kreli was king of Paradise itself. A series of exquisite English parks succeed one after the other; undulating grassy lawns, interspersed with woods and divided every four or five miles by rivers, the course of which we trace by the projecting crags and the rich verdure of the ravines. Each of these streams is unhappily blocked by sand as East London is. The surf roars at their mouths with monotonous thunder, never resting, never perhaps to rest while the globe continues to revolve. The people of the na-

tion to come, who will by-and-by fill this beautiful country, will never sail in either ship or boat on the water which they will see so near them. The steamers will go by their windows almost within hailing distance, but the passengers must be carried on for a hundred miles before they can set foot on shore. The skilfullest crew that ever launched a life-boat would be dashed in pieces in a moment in those tremendous rollers.

We had excellent fresh fish for breakfast this morning. Gigantic mackarel, twenty to thirty pounds weight, follow the steamer. The passengers are fishing for them with halyard rope for lines, and flies constructed of strips of scarlet cloth fastened on shark hooks. The mackarel rise in the wake like salmon. We are going ten knots. Four out of five break off from the speed, a fifth catches tight hold, and three or four of the men are required to haul him in. We had nine of these monsters on the deck in half an hour this morning. So far as my experience goes they are the only fish worth eating that the Indian Ocean produces.

On shore there are few signs of life and less of cultivation. A few herds of Kafir cattle, a few kraals (native villages) at long intervals, here and there a black figure slowly moving along the sands,

seem the solitary human occupants of a land as fair as Homer's Island of the Blest.

We have a distinguished journalist on board. I scandalised him by saying that I thought that in a hundred years newspapers would be abolished by general consent as a nuisance. A gazette of authentic news would be published by authority, and that would be all.

I was told a characteristic story of a Dutch farmer to-day. His estate adjoined the Diamond Fields. Had he remained where he was he could have made a large fortune. Milk, butter, poultry, eggs, vegetables, fruit, ran up to fabulous prices. The market was his own to demand what he pleased. But he was disgusted at the intrusion upon his solitude. The diggers worried him from morning to night demanding to buy, while he required his farm produce for his own family. He sold his land, in his impatience, for a tenth of what he might have got had he cared to wait and bargain, mounted his wife and children into his waggon, and moved off into the wilderness. Which was the wisest man? the Dutch farmer or the Yankee Englishman who was laughing at him? The only book that the Dutchman had ever read was the Bible, and he knew no better. The whole talk among these people is of diamond fields

and gold fields, and diamonds and gold never made the material of a nation, and never will.

Durban, October 2.—The harbour at Durban, named after Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the most popular governor who ever ruled at the Cape, is the spot where Vasco da Gama landed on Christmas Day, in 1498. The country of which Durban is the port, acquired in this way the name of Natal. After an interval of 400 miles nature has relaxed in her monotony, and has created of herself a channel of the same kind as that which Mr. Leicester is attempting to make at East London. A high wooded ridge or bluff, curved and narrow, juts out from the coast-line, stretches parallel to it for two miles towards the east, and then bends round and terminates, forming a natural breakwater. A long point runs out to meet it, and thus inside is formed a landlocked basin ten or twelve miles in circumference, the sea entering through a single narrow passage, and the scour from so large a body of water being thus considerable. Even here there is a bar which the engineers in their attempts at improvement have made rather worse, but in moderate weather vessels of 1000 tons can enter without much difficulty. The scene as we run in is singularly beautiful. The sky is cloudless. The sun, just risen, is faintly veiled by a soft Italian

haze. The ships in the bay are dressed out in flags, white puffs of smoke break from a battery as the guns are fired in honour of the arrival of the steamer. We bring up in a deep channel close under the bluff, in the shade of tropical trees, among which the monkeys skip to and fro, and from which occasionally a too-curious python makes his way along the cable by which ships are moored to the shore. We land at the custom-house, among a group of Natalians, who have hurried down to meet their friends. I am struck, as at Port Elizabeth, with the florid fleshy look of the settlers. The climate of the Cape suits well the lymphatic Teuton. The Dutch, who have been there for two centuries, have expanded into the dimensions of Patagonians. I walked with one of the latter along the sands to the town. We had to cross a stream, and a Kafir undertook to carry us over. He staggered under the Dutchman, and had nearly fallen with him. With me he trotted away as if I had been a child. But I had as nearly dropped from him from another cause. It was my first experience of the smell in such close proximity.

Oct. 3.—The South African colonists are proud of their country, and are pleased to show it. I should have liked a day to look about me at leisure, but I was in the suite of a great person, to whom it

was necessary to show the sugar plantations with the least possible delay, and I have this moment returned from a thirty miles drive over roads as rough as Browning's poetry, having been jolted into idiotcy, and having three times fainted (or very near it), from the combined odour of negroes and molasses. But the country is pretty enough, undulating in rounded hills, the soil red and rich, the sugar plantations most extensive, and considering the difficulty of the labour question, most creditable to Natal energy. The forest, when uncleared, is rich with a variety of trees, all new to me, and the varieties of wild creepers which I admired at East London. The planters' houses are prettily surrounded with orange and lemon trees.

The affair of Langabalele (or Longbelly, as he is called in Durban), is in everybody's mouth. They cannot conceive what the Aborigines Protection Society is displeased at. A chief was going to rebel. He and his people and his allies were eaten up. What else would we have? The chief indeed ought to have been hanged, but that was the only mistake. A Government official said to me that the Governor was supreme Kafir chief, and that everything had been done regularly according to Kafir usage. Langabalele had committed an offence, and the tribe

were responsible for the sins of their head. It was no more than the law in Ireland which made the baronies answerable for murders. As if in any Irish barony for the last 200 years a set of savages had been let loose upon a barony to plunder indiscriminately, and to shoot down the people if they resisted. As if Europeans settled in Africa were to act like savages themselves because it was the custom of the country.

The climate of Natal is exquisite. The days are brilliant and not overpoweringly hot. The nights are cool and fragrant with orange blossom. The stars shine with a steady lustre. The fire-flies gleam. The moth-hawk hunts his fluttering prey. The Indian Ocean moans on the shore, and will moan on till the day which Tintoret has painted, when the ships shall drift deserted on the waves, and the human inhabitants of the earth shall have passed away from it for ever.

Oct. 8.—The people are most kind. I have been staying for a day or two with a clever planter who has an estate and a sugar-mill outside the town. His house—a very handsome one—is finely situated on a brow overlooking the harbour; it is itself of wood, and was brought out complete from Paris. My host talks much and rather bitterly on the Nigger question. If the Kafir would work, he could treble

his profits. As matters are he depends mainly on coolies. If liberality and personal kindness would bring the Kafir into his service he would not find the difficulty which he does. There could not be a better master. It is an intricate problem. Here in Natal are nearly 400,000 natives, who have come in under shelter of the British Government, to escape the tyranny of their own chiefs. They are allowed as much land as they want for their locations. They are polygamists, and treat their women as slaves, while they themselves idle, or do worse. Of whites in the colony there are but 18,000 all told. It is too natural that the whites should feel uneasy.

There are large pythons in the woods here. My host told me (perhaps he was playing with my credulity) that one moonlight night he was cantering down his avenue meaning to sleep at his place of business in the town, when he saw, as he thought, a tree left lying on the road. He got off to remove it, when the tree became alive and attacked him. He was in evening dress, and had no weapon of any kind. The engagement lasted for twenty minutes, when getting tired of it, he made a slip-knot in his silk pocket handkerchief, passed it over the python's neck, and then drawing it tight, he jumped on to his horse, and dragged the monster behind him into

Durban. There, as it seemed dead, he thrust it into a warehouse for the night. When he went to look at it in the morning, it had recovered from its adventure, but not wishing to renew the battle, dashed past him into the street and rolled away into the forest. I tell the tale as X. Y—— told it to me.

Last night we had a native musical exhibition on the lawn. Forty or fifty Kafirs were brought in for my amusement. A large fire was made of pressed sugar-cane; and then in the distance we heard a long low monotonous cry, growing louder as it approached, with a bugle breaking in absurdly at intervals. The ladies of our party arranged themselves in chairs in the verandah. Presently a naked figure, with feathers in his hair, ran in on all-fours like a baboon, capered round the fire dangling an assagai and disappeared. More howling followed, and the procession came out from behind the bushes, chanting something which was like the baying of hounds at the moon, and stamping violently in time. The creatures ranged themselves round the fire and squatted on their haunches. Two or three had shirts, the rest had a thin short wisp of goat's hair round their loins, and that was all. In the uncertain light, in which they looked horribly ape-like, they continued their song or whatever it was. 'Ho ha yah, ho ha yah,' grow-

ing gradually louder and more guttural into 'Hogh ha, hungh ha,' till their chests began to heave and work, and fifty human beings were grunting like so many mad pigs inspired suddenly with an ambition to become musicians. They sweated, they steamed, they swung their clubs over their heads, pausing at intervals to gaze in each other's faces with rolling eyes and shining teeth, as if in rapt admiration of each other's loveliness. Notwithstanding their exertions they were not exhausted. They continued eternally repeating the same movements and the same words. I asked what the words meant. It was no more than what a wolf intends by his howl. 'I like killing. I like killing bull. I like killing buck.' The sole variation being a grunt of praise to the chief of the tribe. 'Hrunch, hrunch, hrunch!' and at the end a prolonged 'Haugh!' in honour of me as an English stranger.

Such is the free Kafir of Natal, as he lives at his own sweet will under the shelter of the British dominion. Under his chief in the forest he is at least a man. Trained and disciplined under European authority he might become as fine a specimen of manhood as an English or Irish policeman. Left at liberty to do as he pleases this is what he becomes. Do we think the black races so *superior* to Europeans

that they can improve without training? Our grandfathers treated them as cattle; we treat them as if it were a sin to lay them under the same restraint as our own children. Our cruelty and our tenderness are alike fatal to them; the second, perhaps, is the most fatal of the two.

There is little wonder that with such surroundings few English colonists think of Natal as a permanent home. The English and Scotch in South Africa have gone there mostly to make fortunes and to return when they are made. The Dutch alone are attached to the soil, and unless we change our ways the Dutch must be the ruling race there.

Maritzburg, Oct. 17.—Arrived here a week ago, after a picturesque drive of fifty miles on the mail cart. After leaving the coast and the sugar plantations, signs of cultivation disappear almost wholly. There are a few farms scattered along the roadside, but with little sign of work upon them. The energy of the colony has gone into the transport department. The enormous wealth suddenly developed at the Diamond Fields has revolutionised South Africa. Horses, men, and cattle are out upon the roads waggon driving between the Fields and the ports. The poor Kafirs must have many merits. The farmers go away, leaving their houses and their families and

property undefended. No outrage is ever heard of. The waggons are sent many hundred miles through a country almost uninhabited. They are loaded with a thousand articles which the natives much covet, and highway robbery is unknown. Yet the whites are afraid of them. No wonder, considering the disproportion of numbers. If they could be induced to work they would be manageable; but the settlers legitimately dread the effects of deliberate idleness supported by polygamy and female slavery, on the native character. The Langabalele affair was an explosion of the normal uneasiness, and the blame of it lies with the system more than with the Natal Government.

What is to be done with this country? It cannot be left as it is. Is it to be annexed to the Cape Colony? Is it to be a confederate province of a South African dominion? Is it to be a Crown colony with a military governor? Should it be made independent and allowed to attach itself to the Dutch republics? Time will show. But it becomes more and more clear to me that if South Africa is to remain under the British flag, the choice lies between one of two policies, and that any other will fail.

If we can make up our minds to allow the colonists to manage the natives their own way, we may safely confederate the whole country. The Dutch will be

in the majority, and the Dutch method of management will more or less prevail. They will be left wholly to themselves for self-defence, and prudence will prevent them from trying really harsh or aggressive measures. In other respects the Dutch are politically conservative, and will give us little trouble.

If, on the other hand, we are determined to direct the native management from home, it will be mere insanity to erect a powerful and united constitution, with a legislature and a responsible ministry, with which we shall immediately come into collision. A united South Africa must then be governed as a province of India. We must keep the military and police force in our own hands, and along with it the entire administration and the entire responsibility. In this way, so far as I can see, there will be no great difficulty either. But attempts to combine the two methods will certainly lead to disaster.

At Maritzburg I am occupied in preparing for my journey into the Free States. My equipage will be a strong African cart, six mules, a tent, a gun and a rifle, a black driver, and a young Dutchman, son of a member of the Natal Council, who goes with me to interpret and be otherwise useful. Maritzburg being the seat of Government, I find an unexpectedly cultivated and agreeable society there, and my

friend the judge, who has accompanied me from Dartmouth, is the most charming of hosts.

The country round is at present a mere desert. How beautiful it will one day be, when it is irrigated and planted, a single specimen of what the soil can produce will suffice to show.

Six years ago the judge, who understands gardening, purchased forty-five acres of perfectly open moor. The spot which he selected was well situated, and sheltered by a mountain, down which falls a stream of water. He fenced his ground in, and round the borders he sowed the seeds of a variety of coniferæ and the Australian eucalyptus. In this short interval the seeds have shot up into trees forty or fifty feet high. Passing through them you find yourself among groves of oranges, and lemons, and citrons, and limes, figs, peaches, apricots, and almonds. On a favourable slope are a few acres of coffee trees loaded with fruit. You leave the coffee and you are among flowering trees and shrubs. In a hollow is a sheet of water, fringed with roses, azaleas, and geraniums. There is so much shade that you never feel the heat oppressive. If you require refreshment, you can stroll among the strawberry beds, or if you prefer it, among pineapples and melons. Whatever of rare or beautiful, either of

the Old World or the New, European, African, or American, will flourish in this climate and soil, the judge has here cultivated, and so admirable are both that each plant contends with its neighbour which shall spring the soonest to the highest perfection.

We had our luncheon in a dripping cave, festooned with ferns, at the edge of a waterfall. A fairer haunt was never seen for legendary spirit, and I had poured a silent libation to the nymph of the grotto before I remembered that I was in a land where there was neither nymph nor fairy, faun nor saint. These airy beings do not thrive in English colonies under constitutional governments.

But I have a long story to tell, and, much as I should like it from its many pleasant remembrances, I must not linger over Maritzburg. Two extracts more are all that I can afford.

Langabalele pleaded on his trial, as his excuse for not coming when he was sent for, that he feared he might be shot, as Mr. John Shepstone had shot Mattyana. Mattyana was a young chief accused of murder. Mr. Shepstone, as an active excellent officer, had been sent to arrest him, when the alleged shooting took place. Langabalele's plea was not allowed, and he was even held to have aggravated his offence by alleging it. Mr. Shepstone himself

told me what took place, and the story is a characteristic one.

Mr. Shepstone did not think Mattyana guilty of the murder, but he sent for him, and he refused to come unless attended by a bodyguard of 300 warriors. On these terms Mr. Shepstone would not receive him. They fenced with each other for two months. At length a conference was agreed on, with a condition that both parties should be unarmed. Mr. Shepstone could have meditated no treachery, for he had his wife with him. He heard, however, that treachery was intended against himself, and he concealed a short double-barrelled gun under his cloak. He told off a party of men to watch where Mattyana's followers deposited their arms, and ordered them, on receipt of a private signal from himself, to gallop off and secure them.

Mattyana came and his people with him apparently unarmed, but Mr. Shepstone thought that he detected the handles of short assagais showing under their leopard skins. A quarrel followed; blows were struck on both sides. Mr. Shepstone sent off his signal. Mattyana said that he was betrayed, and sprung back among his men. Mr. Shepstone fired two barrels over his head, as he says, to create a panic. The Kafirs ran for their arms, and found

them gone, and then Mr. Shepstone's armed men fell on Mattyana's disarmed men and killed thirty of them.

Mr. Shepstone told me that he was sorry for what had happened, but that he could not help it. He had not intended any foul play, but he said that even if he had he would have been fully justified. Mattyana and his people were resisting a lawful warrant. He, as a police officer, was sent to take him, and was at liberty to use any means that he pleased.

I do not presume to blame Mr. Shepstone, nor do I suppose that he deserves blame. On the other hand, I think Langabalele might innocently enough have remembered the story, and have thought twice before he obeyed a similar summons. The value of the incident, however, lies in the proof which it furnishes of the impossibility of governing a wild population with so weak a police force as alone Natal can afford.

My last Maritzburg extract refers to a visit which I paid to three of Langabalele's sons. They with 500 of their tribe were then, and had been for the last twelve months, prisoners with hard labour in Maritzburg gaol. They had never been tried, and had simply been sentenced by Kafir law, i.e., the

pleasure of the Governor. My interpreter was a Mr. F——, who had spent many years among the tribes, and was by no means predisposed in their favour. The young chiefs are gentlemen in manners, and were perfectly dignified and self-possessed. The prison dress could not conceal the superiority of their breeding. The youngest was silent. The eldest spoke little, but with a full sonorous voice, and an expression of authority. The second, to whom the principal part of the conversation fell, was like an Italian, with a handsome forehead and nose, soft dark eyes, a mouth, though coarse, far finer than the tribe mouths in general, and features singularly mobile. His complexion was dark olive, and I observed that his nails and the last joints of his fingers were almost white.

I asked him a series of questions. First: why his father's men were leaving the Colony when they were interrupted by the volunteers. He said that they were running away. They had heard that they were to be destroyed because their father had not given himself up to the Governor. Their father had done no wrong. But the Governor had sent for him peremptorily, and he was afraid that he would be killed. Besides he was ill and lame.

I said he was well enough to go over the Pass.

They laughed, and answered that, when a man's life is at stake he will do a good deal.

I enquired why they had received the Governor's messengers under arms. They said they were on the point of starting; and when a man runs he does not leave his arms behind him. We came to the gun question, the original cause of the trouble. Natives are not allowed to possess guns in Natal without a special licence. I asked why they had not brought their guns in to the magistrate when called upon. They said they had earned their guns by labour at the Diamond mines. When they bought them, the British Governor at Kimberley had promised that they should be allowed to keep them. On their return to Natal, some of them had brought their guns to the authorities to be registered. They had been taken from them and had not been returned. The guns were their own, fairly purchased with the consent of the Queen's representative. They had never meant to make a bad use of them, and insisted that they had not for one moment dreamt of rebellion. My own impression was that they were speaking truth so far they knew it. My interpreter, who was not prejudiced in their favour, said that if they had been lying he would have detected it in a moment.

I asked if they had anything more to say to me. They said that they had confidence in English justice. They made no complaints. One of their Indunas had fired on the white men in the Pass, and the destruction of their tribe appeared to them the natural consequence. Only they insisted that their father had not been to blame.

And now enough of Maritzburg. To-morrow I start upon my long journey into the Free States.

Bushman's River, Oct. 24.—The road through Natal is a gradual ascent from the sea level to the high plateau of the interior. From the summit of the Drachenberg range, the fall on the eastern side is marked by all the characters of mountain scenery; sharp precipices, abrupt ravines, and rivers leaping down in a succession of cascades. When I pass the crest, I am told that I shall find myself on a boundless plain, sloping westwards imperceptibly for a thousand miles to the Atlantic. The roadside is fringed with the skeletons of the wretched mules and oxen which, overdriven and brutally treated, have dropped out of the waggon teams and have fallen down and died. In a few hours their bones are cleaned by the vultures. We are now 5000 feet above the sea. The Drachenberg is right in front of us, looking like the Pyrenees from Dax, the

colours only softer and more Italian. The farms appear more and more neglected. I have not seen one labourer working in the fields since I left Maritzburg. Horse, man, and ox are on the roads. It is all right, economically, I suppose. More money is to be made in this way. And the remains of the miserable cattle which have been flogged to death? Well, they must have died some time.

The camping places are strewed with broken tins and fragments of Hennessy's brandy bottles. The Kafir costume varies with the climate. Down at Durban it was a hat and shoes, or more often neither. Up here the air is colder, and a cast-off soldier's jacket is in fashion, lower garments being dispensed with everywhere. In the park at Maritzburg I saw a dandy Kafir groom holding the horses of a curricle. He had a short smartly cut groom's coat, a hat with cockade, and nothing else. His lower limbs shone so brightly that they appeared to be polished with blacking. The hotels on the road are tolerable, but the manners of the colonists since I left Maritzburg do not improve. In the English colonies—in South Africa at any rate—there are a set of people who answer to the mean whites of the Southern States of America. A large part of our emigrants are more or less vagabonds, whom their friends have got rid

of. When they see out here any one who looks like a gentleman they make it their business to teach him at once that he is not in England by a rudeness which they mistake for independence. They suppose this country to be virtually a republic, and they consider courtesy to be a bad tradition of the Old World.

Tugeld River, Oct. 25.—A lovely evening, with a full moon, and a soft east wind blowing. I have been sitting in the verandah of the hotel, reluctant to go in. The landscape, the great forms of which are always beautiful, can here be best enjoyed at night, when the dead oxen are no longer visible, or the nakedness to which the country is doomed by the laziness of man. The land here as elsewhere is boundlessly fertile. A large river runs through it with abundant fall. Irrigation is perfectly easy, yet nothing is done. At this hotel we drink the dirty drain water. I asked the landlord if he had no well. Within twenty feet of the surface there was obviously pure water in abundance. 'A well!' he said, indignantly; 'and who is to dig it? The Government won't make the Kafirs work, and if they want wells, they must make them themselves.'

Hotel under the Drachenberg, frontier of the Free State. Oct. 27.—Here at least in the mountains, where the hill-sides and valleys are watered by nature,

I hoped that I should at last taste fresh milk. But I could get only the eternal tinned milk from Switzerland, and they are out of vegetables, for an expected cargo of potatoes has not arrived from Limerick. My landlord at the Drachenberg, however, is not of the idle sort. He is a Boer, the first that I have seen, large-boned, healthy, and good-humoured. He is a cattle and horse breeder, and being on the border, has a farm on the edge of it, where, under the Free State laws, the Kafir servants can be better depended on.

I leave Natal with unhopeful feelings. The settlers themselves are not to blame. In the presence of a vast and increasing native population, encouraged in idleness by the indulgence of those detestable systems of polygamy and female slavery, it is impossible to expect white men to exert themselves for the genuine improvement of the colony. But the fact remains, that a country which seems to have been made by nature to be covered with thriving homesteads and a happy and prosperous people, is given over to barrenness and desolation. Before there can be a change, some authority must be introduced there which will control both blacks and whites, and bring the relations between them into a more natural condition. The sole remedy thought of

here is more freedom, and what they call a 'sponsible ministry.' They look to America, and they fancy the colonies have only to be free to grow as the United States have grown. America was colonised *before the aloe had blossomed.* The grain of the old oak is in New England. The English in South Africa are pulpy endogens. They may make a nation some day, but they have a long journey to travel first.

One would like to know the reflections which the aloe makes upon itself when it throws up its flowering stem. Did ever plant make such unexampled progress? and progress so sure, too; for is not the flower the promise of the seed of future aloes the heart of the aloe's life? One splendid leap and bound, and a dull prickly shrub has shot into a tree, which is fringed with pendant bells. Each infant aloe colony at its side, blossoms too in tiny mimicry, saying to its parent, 'Am not I as good as you? or possibly better?' How little either of them know the price which must be paid for their burst of vanity! America was not established in this way. The price is death.

Harrismith, Orange Free State, Oct. 29.—Crossed into the Free State yesterday. The top of the pass is 1800 feet above the hotel. Our cart was dragged

up by oxen. The mules walked. The road on the Natal side winds up against the face of the mountain. We arrive at the top, and find, as I was led to expect, a plain level and boundless as the sea. Harrismith, the first place we come to, is named after Sir Harry Smith, of Aliwal and Kafir war notoriety, and is a growing, well-conditioned town. The change of government is already apparent in the absence of loafing natives. The Free State laws against vagrancy are strict. Every man found wandering about may be called on to show how he is gaining his subsistence, and if he can give no satisfactory account of himself, he is set to work on the roads.

Leokof (*Lion-head*), *Saturday, Oct.* 31*st.*—I was in luck at Harrismith. I fell in with Sir M. B——, an English baronet, ex-captain of dragoons, who after some years of service in India, was obliged by bad health to leave the army, and not wishing to idle away the remainder of his life in England, determined to settle as a farmer in South Africa. He entered into partnership with another Englishman, Mr. ——, an extreme Radical, but as Sir M. —— said, with apparent surprise at the possibility of such a thing, 'a gentleman to the heels of his boots.' They bought two tracts of land, one in the Transvaal, one in the Free State, and five years ago Sir M. —— was set

down on the estate which was to be his future home, sixty miles east of Harrismith. It consisted of 19,000 acres of grassy wilderness, without so much as a shed or Kafir hut upon it, with a round kopf or hill, flat at top, with steep sides, rising out of the middle of it, which a few years since was a noted lion preserve. The plains were still covered with infinite herds of antelopes. His nearest neighbour was a Boer, twelve miles distant. He was unmarried and alone.

Up to this time Sir M.—— had lived in the luxury of a smart cavalry regiment, and had never had less than three or four servants to anticipate every want. In South Africa at starting he had nothing to depend on but himself. He built his house with his own hands, with only a native or two to help him. He made fences and sheds and farm-buildings. He gathered cattle, sheep, and horses about him. He drove his own plough, he sheared his own lambs, he was his own mason, house carpenter, cook, and housemaid. Gradually he gathered servants and labourers about him, as a man who will work himself is sure to do. The hardest part of the business is over. His farming prospers, and he is steadily and surely making a fortune

I met Sir M. —— at dinner at Harrismith. He was to return to Leokof the next day, and he invited

me to go with him. It lay on my own road to Pretoria, so it was settled that my cart and mules should follow at leisure. Sir M. —— took charge of me in his dog-cart, and we started with four half-broken horses, which he drove splendidly. We slept on the road at a *winkel*, or roadside store, where Sir M. —— had an enthusiastic welcome. In the morning we started early, and were here to breakfast. Sir M. —— is a tall handsome man about forty, with a hooked nose, a grey soldier's eye, a well-cut chin; and in face, figure, and mind a thoroughbred aristocrat. By courtesy, uprightness, and natural superiority he commands the respect of the Boers. He accepts his situation, not cheerfully, but without complaint, sustained by the consciousness of success, and too proud to quarrel with a lot which he has made for himself. Nature is hard up here 6000 feet above the sea. No more orange groves and rose gardens; but the treeless, shelterless plain, with the fierce sun by day and frosts at night, and thunder-storms beyond the worst I have ever witnessed in Europe. Sir M. —— is showing what an Englishman can still be. It is a relief to me after what I saw in Natal, and I admire the character that has fought through so rude a trial. At meals he has but one table, and he sits himself at the head of it, with his white servants on each side

of him, well mannered and respectful. So it was in England for many centuries, while the feudal loyalty, which democracy has not yet wholly worn away, made its way into the blood of our race. So old Cato dined with his serfs in the farm kitchen, probably on just such fare as we had before us to-day; soup, mutton, bread, and a glass or two of wine of the country.

Nov. 1.—A Boer rode over this morning to enquire after Sir M. ——, a report having gone abroad that he was mad. It seems that he had lately bought a stallion for breeding purposes. The stallion was unequal to his duties, and was fit for nothing else, so instead of selling him under false pretences to another neighbour Sir M —— had him shot. It was thought in the neighbourhood that no one in the right possession of his senses could have done so wild a thing.

Nov. 4. On the road to the Vaal River—First experience of camping out. I am alone in my tent with a glaring sun raising the temperature inside to 90 degrees. The mules have strayed, being insufficiently hobbled. I sent Charley, my black driver, in search of them in the early morning. He returned with his face as near white as nature permitted, declaring that the devil had jumped out of the ground at his feet with four young ones. I suppose it was an antbear. Any way the mules are lost. He has

gone back to our last halting-place to look for them. My other youth has started with a rifle to shoot buck, which are round us in tens of thousands, and here am I by the side of a pond which is trampled by the antelopes into mud soup, the only stuff in the shape of water which we have to depend on for our coffee, and, alas! for our washing. To add to the pleasure of the situation the season of the thunder-storms has set in. The lightning was playing round us all yesterday afternoon, and we shall now have a storm daily. Whole teams of oxen are often killed. To a white man, they say, there is no danger while he has a black at his side, the latter being the better conductor. When one is struck another must be immediately substituted.

The Boers are shooting on the hills round me. They ride up to the herds and fire into the middle of them, a cart follows to carry the game, and the vultures wheel in hundreds overhead on the watch for the wounded. These antelopes consume the grass, and must be exterminated before sheep and cattle can be reared.

Heidelberg, Nov. 7.—A young Boer brought in the mules, which he found fifteen miles off, making their way back to Natal. We were soon on the road again, and yesterday evening crossed the Vaal River.

We are now in the Transvaal Republic, the Alsatia of South Africa, where every runaway from justice, every broken-down speculator, every reckless adventurer finds an asylum ; while the gold just discovered is tempting stray Californians and Australians to try their fortune there as well. Over the river at the passage is an accommodation house kept by a Prussian. Outside were two half-drunk English sailors who had deserted at Simon's Bay. After a wash in the river and a tolerable supper the Prussian offered me a bed on a sofa which I was rash enough to accept, though a sheep just killed was hanging almost over the place where I was to lie. Before I had been five minutes on my couch I had to fly for my life from the legions of vermin crawling over me, and take refuge with Charley in the cart. The night was bitterly cold. We were off at daybreak. At night we reached Heidelberg, a small but growing place, with a magistrate's house and a church. The proprietor of the hotel told me as I entered that he was born in Grosvenor Square. His family had been ruined, and he had come to this. At supper I met an Australian geologist, who is making a mineral survey of the Transvaal for some company. This gentleman has travelled all over the country, and gave me his opinion of the native question. In the Orange Free

States the blacks are few in number, and are under perfect control. In the Transvaal they swarm as they do in Natal. They do as little work, and as little does any one think of forcing them to work. Their women cultivate their corn patches. The men wander about and steal cattle. In Natal they stand in some awe of the British Government. In the Transvaal they stand in none, neither of the British nor of the Boers nor their President, and my Australian friend's opinion was that a war of races was not far off.

Pretoria, Nov. 12.—At the farthest point of my journey. Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal and the seat of government of its famous President, lies in a basin surrounded by rocky hills, at the rise of the Limpopo River. Springs of abundant and beautifully clear water break out in the adjoining valleys. The Dutch, who have a genius for irrigation, have carried open conduits along the streets. The trees in the moistened soil flourish with the greatest luxuriance. We have descended 2000 feet from Harrismith; and although the place is not yet a quarter of a century old, you seem as you come down into the hollow of Pretoria, to be entering a forest of eucalyptus and oleander. The Volksraad is in session, and the town is full. There are several hotels. I enter

one called the Edinburgh, and am shown into a room where a Kafir woman is washing the floor. The floor is of a sandy clay taken from the ant-hills. The washing is with loose cow-dung, of which an enormous pile is emptied out upon it. Cow-dung is a vermin-killer, and like many other things not intolerable when one grows used to it.

Pretoria is full of English, though at present they have but two voices in the Raad. Being now politically powerless, and knowing that the English flag would treble the value of their properties, and give them security from Kafirs, they are naturally anxious for annexation. I tell them that with self-government in the Cape Colony the time is past for high-handed methods; the Dutch majority in the Cape Parliament would take any violence offered to their kinsmen in the republics as an injury to themselves.

Nov. 18.—I have been here for ten days. I have seen the President many times, and he and his different officials have talked to me freely. I must not repeat confidential conversations, but this much is becoming every day more clear to me. I heard at Cape Town, I heard at Port Elizabeth, I heard everywhere, only with gathering emphasis since I entered the Free State, that Lord Kimberley's annexation of the Diamond Fields was one of the most foolish mistakes

which has ever been made by a British Colonial Minister. Six years ago the two Republics would have welcomed confederation under the British flag. Their independence was originally forced upon them. They petitioned afterwards to be taken back and were refused. But for that one unlucky step the petition would probably have been renewed. They consider now that they have been robbed, slandered, and insulted, and every Dutchman in South Africa is indignant about it. If we had said openly, when the diamond mines were discovered, that circumstances were altered, and that it was no longer convenient to leave these provinces in their present state, they would have grumbled, but they would have borne it. But when we broke a treaty which we had renewed only a year before, and then set to work to worry them, and pick quarrels with them, and make it seem as if they had been the aggressors, the stubborn Boer set his back up, and his kindred in the colony it seems will stand by him. The facts are briefly these. The Diamond Fields lay within the territory which had been occupied by the Boers since 1854. In the treaties by which we made the two Free States independent, we promised to leave them for the future to settle their differences with the natives without interference on our side. The most important of these

treaties we had actually renewed in 1869. In 1870 the diamonds were discovered. A claim was put in for the diamond district by a native chief, and, directly contrary to our engagement, we took the chief's side in the quarrel. We settled the dispute in his favour; we took possession in his name; we then induced him to make it over to us, and to justify ourselves we have heaped charges of foul dealing on the unhappy Free State Governments. We have sent menacing ultimatums to both of them, as if we were deliberately making or finding excuses to suppress them. Had we only let the Diamond Fields alone, the mere influx of British population would long ago have brought both the provinces back to us. By our stupid interference we have exasperated the entire Dutch population in the colony and out of it, and as confederation, by bringing the Dutch States into the dominion, would give the Dutch element an overwhelming preponderance, we have made it a serious question whether confederation is a step which can now be safely ventured. My own private opinion is more and more that the Imperial Government should confine itself to the Table Mountain Peninsula, fortify the two harbours, and hold it as a naval and military station, leaving the rest of the country to itself.

The President spoke at a public dinner last night, talking with vague enthusiasm about a united South Africa. I asked him what the flag was to be. He hesitated, but I saw what he meant. I told him that a South African flag would float over Cape Town Castle and Simon's Bay when South Africa were strong enough to drive us out, but neither he nor I would live to see it. I wish the good people in England would resolve definitely as to what they want to be done. When they know their own minds, the colonists will know what to expect.

Potscheffstrom, Nov. 20.—On the road once more On my way to this place from Pretoria I spent a night at the house of a representative Transvaal Boer, Oberholster by name. Camping out has grown disagreeable. The forenoons are clear and hot. About two o'clock flecks of cloud begin to show. By sunset the horizon is black all round, distant lightning flashing in every direction. The air becomes deathly still, and by this time your tent must be pitched, and a trench dug round it; your cart must be secured, and your belongings lashed as tight as ropes can bind them. Suddenly, with a loud roar, comes a hurricane, sending dust, sand, gravel whisking past, as if the bags of Æolus had burst. This lasts five minutes or so. Again a pause, and then the artillery of heaven

opens out upon you, a crash as if from a thousand cannons, east, west, north, south, overhead and everywhere. The forked lightning blazes without interval, red, white, blue, green. The rain happily pours in cataracts along with it, or the trees and animals exposed would fare worse than they do. This sort of thing continues six or seven hours, and is repeated almost every day while the wet season lasts, so that a tent, notwithstanding the superior cleanliness of it, no longer forms the most comfortable of night lodgings.

My old Boer host on this occasion is a patriarch of sixty. His farm is large, well planted, and well cultivated, and inside his house and outside there is an appearance of rude abundance. On his hall table stands a huge clamped Bible of 1750, with a register of the family for 120 years. His sons and daughters are married, and live with their wives and husbands in cottages on the estate at no great distance. With each new family another hundred acres have been fenced in and brought under the plough. Children and grandchildren dropped in for the evening meal at the common table, young giants, handsome, grave, and ponderous, and bright-eyed girls dashing through the doors out of the storm, and flinging off their dripping hoods. Our supper consisted of cold veni-

son, eggs, bread, and Indian corn, with—here at any rate—fresh milk. The old man said a long grace before and after. I glanced at the youths. There was not a sign of weariness about them. Their manners were perfectly simple and reverent.

My bed was rough, but clean, and I was not disturbed by intruders. In the morning I was awoke by a psalm, with which the day's work always begins on a Boer's farm. The breakfast was like the supper overnight. The old lady and two young ones, who alone appeared of the party of the evening before, looked as stiff and prim as if they had walked out of one of Van Eyck's pictures.

The Diamond Fields, Nov. 28.—The storms put an end to my gipsy life. I sold my cart, mules, and guns at Potscheffstrom, sent my two lads home by a waggon to Natal, and took to the mail cart. The roads are mere tracks, littered with stones the size of thirty-two-pound cannon balls. The mail travels night and day, with ten mules or horses, and plunges on with supreme disregard either of rock or hole. The cart is roofed and curtained with leather, the brass buttons by which the curtains are fastened being so conveniently arranged that at each jolt you are likely to have your temple cut or your cheek laid open. The distance from Potscheffstrom to this place is

from four to five hundred miles. I had several fellow-passengers, all characteristic of the spot for which I was bound. One was a Jew diamond dealer, another a store-keeper, another a digger, another a land shark or speculator. A fifth amused and instructed me. 'When I first came to this country, sir,' he said, 'I tried industry; but it didn't pay, and I took to scheming and did better.' His scheming consisted in going to England when the Diamond diggings were opened, buying a gambling and drinking saloon with all necessary fittings, securing the services of half a dozen young ladies from the Haymarket to attend, and carrying it all out and setting it going. With this contrivance he made thirty or forty thousand pounds in one year, but he lost it the next in gambling. 'Alas!' he said, 'all that I touch turns to gold. Any fool can make a fortune here, but it requires a wise man to keep it.'

The nearer we approach the Fields the louder and more universal the cry against the injustice done to the Free States. An Englishman whom I met at Christiana told me he was ashamed of his country.

On the evening of the third day after leaving Potscheffstrom we came down to the Vaal River, intending to cross in a ferry boat an hour before sunset. The thunder-clouds unfortunately had gathered

up that afternoon blacker than I had yet seen them. Between four and five o'clock the storm began, and between the darkness and the blinding effects of the lightning, in the intervals of the flashes we could scarcely see ten yards from us. Even in South Africa I never saw such a display of celestial fireworks. The lightning was rose colour, deepening at times to crimson. Each flash appeared like a cross, a vertical line seeming to strike the earth, a second line crossing it horizontally. The air was a blaze of fire. The rain fell in such a deluge that the plain in a few minutes was like a lake. Of course we could not move. The horses stood shivering up to their fetlocks in water. At one time there was no interval between the flash and the report, so that we were in the very centre of the storm. The sense of utter helplessness prevented me from being nervous; I sat still and looked at it in mere amazement. In two hours it was over. The sky cleared almost suddenly, and, with the dripping landscape shining in the light of a summer sunset, we splashed on to the river, here about as broad as the Thames at Westminster. We crossed with some trouble, the ferry boat being half full of water. Night being now on us in earnest, we had to wait at the ferryman's hut till the moon rose. He had caught some barbel (so

he called them) in the river with night lines. One of these monsters, as big as a moderate-sized pig, with an enormous head and long horns, the conductor bought, to take on and sell at the Diamond Fields. The diggers are open-handed, and the price of anything at Kimberley (as my speculating friend told me) is whatever the owner likes to ask. I objected to this addition to our company in the waggon, so it was lashed to the pole underneath, the tail flapping on the sands. At 10.30 we started (having lost time to make up) with ten half-broken horses. I asked how the road was, and got a shrug for an answer. In a few minutes we were bounding at full speed over a track littered with cannon balls, and our bodies flying like shuttlecocks between our seats and the roof. I for one felt as if I should go to pieces. At intervals the conductor looked in, coolly saying, 'Well, gentlemen, how do you feel yourselves?'

He knew by experience, I suppose, that we should be none the worse for it, and people do not go to South Africa to be comfortable. Enough that at ten this morning we arrived at the spot which has caused so much heart-burning in South African society, and disturbed the market for jewels all over the world.

The town of Kimberley, so called because Lord Kimberley was the Colonial Minister who is respon-

sible for the annexation of this precious possession, is like a squalid Wimbledon Camp set down in an arid desert. The houses are of iron, wood, and canvas, every particle of which has been brought out from England, and has been carried up on waggons from the sea. The streets are axle deep in what is either mud or dust according to the season. The inhabitants, who are of all nations and colours, muster at the present time between twenty and thirty thousand, and may be described as the Bohemians of the four continents. By Bohemian I do not mean to be uncomplimentary. I mean merely a class of persons who prefer adventure and speculation to settled industry, and who do not work well in the harness of ordinary life. Here are diggers from America and Australia, German speculators, Fenian head-centres, traders, saloon-keepers, professional gamblers, barristers (I heard one of these say it was a lawyer's Eldorado), ex-officers of the army and navy, younger sons of good family, who have not taken to a profession or have been obliged to leave it. A marvellous motley assemblage, among whom money flows like water from the amazing productiveness of the mine; and in the midst of them a hundred or so keen-eyed Jewish merchants, who have gathered like eagles over their prey, and a few thousand na-

tives who have come to work for wages, to steal diamonds, and to lay their earnings out in rifles and powder.

There are three pits out of which the diamonds are taken. One of them two miles off is comparatively unproductive, one better, but still negligently worked; the third is the famous Koppe, about which the town has formed itself. This Koppe was once a rounded hillock, swelling out of the plain and covered with mimosa trees, under the shade of which passing waggons stopped to rest. Eyes negligently looking round one day saw something shining in the grass; a tuft was pulled up, and more sparks were seen about the roots. Digging began, and it was discovered that through the level shale which forms the ordinary surface an oval hole had been cut, as if by some elliptical boring tool, working with singular evenness. The length of the opening is about 1200 feet, the breadth, 900, the sides perpendicular; the depth unknown, for they are afraid to bore. A discovery that the bottom is near would destroy the value of the property. A discovery that there is no bottom would convulse the diamond market. At present they have cut down about 120 feet.

Four or five thousand blacks are picking into the blue crumbling substance, neither clay nor stone, in

which the diamonds are embedded. The area is divided into claims, or quadrilateral sections, thirty feet by twenty, which are held as freeholds, and again are subdivided into half and quarter claims. Each owner works by himself or with his own servants. He has his own wire rope, and his own basket, by which he sends his stuff to the surface to be washed. The rim of the pit is fringed with windlasses. The descending wire-ropes stretch from them thick as gossamers on an autumn meadow. The system is as demoralising as it is ruinous. The owner cannot be ubiquitous: if he is with his washing-cradle, his servants in the pit steal his most valuable stones and secrete them. Forty per cent. of the diamonds discovered are supposed to be lost in this way. The sides fall in from the strain of so much weight on the brink. A company working the mine systematically with a couple of steam-engines could produce the same results with a tenth of the labour, and so obviously is the interest of the claim-owners in making the change, that if left to themselves they would form into a company to-morrow. The Government, however, forbids it; for the natural reason that the vagabond population would disappear, the army of gamblers, keepers of saloons and drink-shops; a single magistrate would then

suffice for peace and order, and the Governor and his staff and the £100,000 a year which is now raised and spent out of the produce of the pit would disappear together.

The Governor himself, Mr. Southey, is one of the most remarkable men in South Africa. He won his spurs in the Kafir war of 1834. He was with Sir Harry Smith when Hintza, the Kafir chief, was killed, and he so much recommended himself that he rose fast in the public service. He was for many years Colonial Secretary, and held that office when, in opposition to his protests, responsible government was thrust upon the colony. He could not believe that it would work successfully. His desire was and is to see South Africa British up to the Zambesi River, the native chiefs taken everywhere under the British flag, and the whole country governed by the Crown. When the Diamond Fields were annexed as a Crown colony, he accepted the governorship, with a hope that, north of the Orange River, he might carry out his own policy, check the encroachments of the Transvaal Republic, and extend the empire internally.

It has been the one mistake of Mr. Southey's life. Being without a force of any kind he could only control the republics by the help of the native chiefs, and the coercion of the republics in any way became impossible

from the moment that the control of the Cape Colony was passed over to its own people. Otherwise I have rarely met a man whom I have more admired. Mr. Southey is over seventy. He drove me one day seventy miles in a cart with as wild a team as I ever sat behind, and he went to a party in the evening. I said to myself as I looked at him, 'If some one came in and told you that you were to be taken out and shot in five minutes, you would finish what you were about with perfect deliberation, and not a muscle of your face would alter.'[1]

I have heard much while here of the manner in which the claim of Waterboer, the native chief whose cause we espoused, was pressed against the Free States. It has become painfully clear to me that the English Government has been misled by a set of border land jobbers into doing an unjust thing, and it is equally difficult to persist and to draw back. I am now going to Bloemfonteine, where I shall see the President, and hear what he has to say.

Bloemfonteine, Dec. 6.—After a week at the Diamond Fields, I started again in the mail cart for this place. The distance is but ninety miles. The roads,

[1] Mr. Southey has now returned to the Cape Parliament, where it is to be hoped that he will once more render valuable service to his country.

I was told, were good, and that we should do it in a single day. Alas! between the Diamond Fields and Bloemfonteine lies the Modder or Mud River, fitly so named, especially if it be in flood as it was when we came up to it. Dense volumes of turbid filth were rolling along at the level of the banks, and the passage seemed impossible. We spent the night at a shanty. In the morning the water did not seem to have fallen. 'It was stark,' the driver said, but he had seen it worse, and we must go any way. He took us three miles higher up, to a place where he said the river was broader and not so deep. Passing through the fringe of bush we had the Modder again before us, perhaps 200 yards wide. The bank on which we stood was twenty-five feet above the river, with a steep track cut through it, down which the carts could go. The horses were taken out, as they cannot be trusted to draw steadily in deep water, and they at once plunged in and struggled across half swimming. A dozen heavy oxen then appeared on the opposite side led by Kafirs, who were to come over and take charge of us. The stream was violent. The Kafirs were up to their necks, and sometimes slipped and rolled under. The oxen and they reached us undrowned, however, and were 'inspanned' to our cart. We put our boxes on the seats, and our-

selves climbed to the top of them, and commended ourselves to Providence. The slide down the bank was the first and worst danger, for the pole was crazy and bent and twisted as the weight fell upon it. It held, however, and in we went, and with the driver swearing, the Kafirs yelling, and the water pouring through the cart within an inch of the seats, we scrambled across somehow, and found brandy and hot coffee ready, prepared for us in case we had met with a misadventure.

Without further misfortune we arrived at Bloemfonteine, a pretty town 4500 feet above the sea, clustered round the foot of the old British fort on which the Free State flag is now flying. It is now the Dutch capital, the stronghold of Dutch politics and Dutch religion, the central object of the pride and hope of Dutch nationality.

For some reason unknown to me, Bloemfonteine has been selected also as a special scene of missionary exertion by the extreme High Church party in England. There is a bishop here whose vestments would look gorgeous on a Greek archimandrite, there is an Anglo-Catholic nunnery, in the neighbourhood there is a college of Anglo-Catholic monks, and attached to the nunnery an excellent girls' school, of which the Dutch themselves speak in terms of high admiration.

The day after my arrival was Sunday. I went to the cathedral, when the bishop preached. Being in a republic he had caught something of its spirit. He told us that we lived in days of democracy, when the principle of loyalty had no longer any earthly object to which it could attach itself. But every natural principle must have some object, and loyalty would therefore instinctively turn to Christ, and to the Bishop. I thought the anticipation rather sanguine. But the Bishop is an accomplished and even superior person. I dined with him afterwards, and heard much that interested me on the state of the country. He tells me that the price of everything is five times what it was before the diamond discovery. Living is three times as expensive as in England. The country is flooded with money; but with butter at seven shillings a pound, and milk a shilling a pint—the present prices in Bloemfonteine market—no one is much the better for it. The English trade and speculate, but do not care to cultivate the soil. The Dutch grow what they require for their own households, but being indifferent about money they will not go out of their way to raise supplies for others; and yet we are told that the Diamond Fields have saved the country. Politically, socially, and economically they appear to me to have

been a mere nuisance. The feeling here is extremely bitter against the English Government. I cannot wonder at it.

Dec. 7.—This morning I called on the President. He is a resolute, stubborn-looking man, with a frank, but not over-conciliatory, expression of face. The day of my visit being his birthday, he was sitting in state to receive visitors. He has just recovered from a severe illness, and his people are enthusiastically attached to him. His manner to me was short and abrupt. He said that the English Government had ill treated him. He had done what he could to bring about an arrangement; but he had failed, and we must now take our own course. Experience showed that all colonies became sooner or later independent. At no very distant time the British would leave South Africa altogether, and he could afford to wait. I said the Cape was not a colony only, but a naval and military station, and of vital importance to us. I did not think it likely that we should abandon it. He was cold and incredulous, and we have parted without any wish expressed on his part to see me again. I am sorry, for though his face is hard as a flint, integrity is written in every line of it.

Dec. 8.—Better prospects. The President has sent to ask me to dine with him.

. . . . . .

I here omit many pages, chiefly occupied with the Diamond Field transactions. The President has been since in England. The dispute with the Imperial Government has been arranged on terms mutually satisfactory. There is no occasion to pursue further details which are now superfluous.

I stayed over a week at Bloemfonteine. Two days were given to a visit to Trabancho, an independent native territory lying in the middle of the republic, and ruled over by an old Bechuana chief or king, named Moroco. Moroco was a middle-aged man when the Dutch first crossed the Orange River. He is a relic of another age, and the State Secretary and the Chief Justice offered to drive me over to see him. Here is the account of our expedition.

Friday, Dec. 13.—We started yesterday in a cart with four horses for Trabancho. It is thirty-five miles off, the mountain being clearly visible from Bloemfonteine.

The drive was of the usual kind. It is hot summer, the rain has stopped for a while, and the mud in the roads is baked as hard as brick. We had again to cross the Modder River. The leaders bolted as we were going down into it, and we were swinging for a moment over the edge of a precipice.

As we scrambled up the other side the wheelers jibbed; we were saved from rolling back into the water only by the depth of the clay in which the wheels were buried. These adventures pass for nothing in South Africa. The Bishop's archdeacon was upset in a river a week ago, and lost his cope and chasuble.

At four o'clock we reached our destination, and drove to the Wesleyan Missionary Station, a long straggling house with a chapel and school-room attached. Across a ravine stands the new Anglican monastery. Between the station and the monks there is little or no communication. It was a lovely summer evening, and the missionary and his family being out, we strolled up to call on the King. In the South African towns generally the natives are relegated to the suburbs. At Trabancho the King and his court have the post of honour. The white traders and clergy are in the back premises. The city is composed of about 1500 beehive huts, thatched with reeds, each surrounded with a stone wall. Swarms of children were playing in the sunshine, necklaces of beads being their chief or only covering, and the little stomachs blown out till they shone, with mealies, or buckwheat porridge. A flagstaff denoted the royal residence. We made for

it, and presently the eldest of the princes came out, a middle-aged thick-set man, dressed in a Methodist parson's cast-off suit of clothes, followed by other chiefs in skins. We shook hands, and immediately after the old King himself came up, handsomely dressed in leopard-skins, and walking slowly with a knob-stick. Chairs were placed for the King and the visitors. The Prime Minister and the court jester sat on the ground on each side of his Majesty, and a circle of thirty or forty of the principal people squatted round, some of the youngsters wearing military caps. All were covered more or less, and had at least a blanket.

The King asked after the Queen, whom he professed to hold in high respect, and then made some minute enquiries into the Diamond Field business. Having satisfied his curiosity, I asked him if he had heard of the Langabalele affair. He looked surprised, affected ignorance, and appealed to his minister. The minister seemed to know no more than he. I discovered afterward that they had been watching the whole business with the intensest interest. At that moment a party from Langabalele's tribe were in Trabancho, and were probably in the suite listening to the conversation.

Two of the princes are Christians, and are anxi-

ous for their father's conversion. But he sticks to his heathenism. 'My sons,' he said, 'want me to be baptized. I say to them, Christians here,' pointing to the Wesleyan Station, 'and Christians there,' pointing to the Anglican monks. 'Christians there won't speak to Christians here. When one of them has converted the other it will be time to come to me.'

Trabancho is maintained by the Free State, partly to show the world how good a Dutch State can be to the natives, and partly as a nursery for labourers; but it was not a pretty sight to me. Food of course has to be supplied for so many people, and a certain quantity of ground is cultivated; but the work here as elsewhere is almost wholly done by the women. The men are not allowed to fight, and fighting being the only labour they understand, they are hopelessly idle.

When we returned to the station the missionary had come in. He entertained us to the best of his ability. He gave us a supper, which, if plain, was abundant. Hunger was the best of sauces, and his conversation was instructive if not amusing. To lodge us was the chief difficulty. There was one spare bed, and there was a sofa in the sitting-room. The Chief Justice and the Secretary of State took

the bed and gave the sofa to me. My mind misgave me. I remembered my experience with a sofa at the Vaal River. There were neither matches nor candles, so I prudently did not extinguish the lamp when I lay down. Five minutes were all that I could bear. I bounded back into my clothes, turned up the lamp again, and settled into a chair. What was I to do? On the table lay a history of Methodism in seven volumes, a commentary on St. Paul in five volumes. Happily on a distant shelf, concealed modestly behind a curtain, I discovered a pile of novels, and read myself to sleep with 'Modern Accomplishments.'

Dec. 15.—I have heard all that the President can tell me. I have seen evidence of the plainest kind that in the time of the sovereignty the British authorities themselves occupied the territory where the Diamond Fields have been discovered, and that we then recognised no right to it in Waterboer or his Griquas. It had been under the jurisdiction of the Free State ever since the proclamation of independence. Another Griqua chief had asserted some vague right to it. The Free State Government, wishing to be conciliatory, had paid this chief a sum of money to extinguish any doubt which might remain. The English Government, in taking up

Waterboer's cause, have distinctly broken a treaty which they had renewed but one year before in a very solemn manner, and the Colonial Office, it is painfully evident to me, has been duped by an ingenious conspiracy. Duped perhaps is scarcely the right word. Had *we* ourselves remained in possession of the country, not much would have been heard of the claims of Waterboer.

I have now learned as much as I am likely to learn, and may make my way back to Port Elizabeth. I am tired of knocking about. I have still 500 miles of Cape roads before me. The rivers in the colony are reported to be in flood, and the bridges to be broken. Mr. H——, an exceptionally agreeable English gentleman, who is here, undertakes to drive me in his cart to Fauresmith, seventy-two miles of the way. There I shall fall in with 'Cobb's coach' from Kimberley to Algoa Bay. I have tried to point out to people here how absurd it is for them to talk of South African independence. In the towns they import everything which they consume. They import their flour; they import Australian meat; they import milk, butter, tinned vegetables; they import their furniture, their clothes, and even timber to floor and roof their houses. They manufacture nothing except

waggons and harness. They are dependent on Europe for their commonest necessaries of life. They produce, to buy these things, wool, diamonds, gold, copper, and ostrich feathers. But they cannot live on these. Three frigates could close their harbours, and they would be at once upon their knees.

Fauresmith, Dec. 19.—An agreeable drive brought us here yesterday. Mr. H—— told me on the way that the President believes that he is in no danger of forcible annexation. He supposes the European powers would interfere to protect him. If he has no better security, I don't think that will save him.

We saw a curious sight on the way: a locust swarm, a great brown cloud sweeping through the air, pursued by an army of locust-birds, large fly-catchers, like swallows, but twice the size. These birds sweep up and down the swarm clipping off the wings of the locusts, which then fall like rain to the ground, when the birds alight and devour them at leisure. There are all the plagues of Egypt in this country except one. The flies blacken your breakfast table. The frogs have given me many a sleepless night. Lice there are none, but change the translation slightly, and you are provided to your skin's discontent. The locusts desolate the fields and gardens. The hail is so violent that in Natal and

the Transvaal it will pierce holes through roofs of corrugated iron. Under a thunder-cloud there is the darkness of midnight. Red-water and horse-sickness are an equivalent for murrain, and if the rivers are not turned to blood, they come down after rain with the consistency of red soup.

There is another diamond pit at Fauresmith, not encouraging on the surface, but no one knows what may not lie a few feet below. I have met here a man who was agent for the branch of the Griqua tribe that claimed the Kimberley country. It was this man who sold it to the Free State Government in the Griquas' behalf. He told me that the whole transaction with Waterboer was a piece of thimble-rig, and he could prove it in any court of arbitration in the world.

Colesberg, Dec. 19.—Again in the Cape Colony. Cobb's coach hanging fire, and there being some doubt whether any coach would run again till the floods had gone down, I found a friend to drive me to the Orange River. At the passage I was told that I should find a ferry and a carriage which would take me on to Colesberg. The Orange River, though it has still 800 miles to run, is even here an impressive stream —600 feet across, deep and rapid. The ferryman, a Dutchman, and therefore never in a hurry, was slowly

transporting vast droves of oxen to the colonial border. Would he send me over? He would. He would not. He did not know. Why could I not go by the mail cart? It was then noon. He promised me an answer at three. I sat down with a cigar and a drawing-book. Three hours passed. I again applied, and again found myself treated with phlegmatic indifference. The alternative before me was to sleep supperless on the sands. I said nothing, lighted another cigar, reseated myself, and sketched on. He approved of my composure, relented, and told me I should go. There was really not the slightest difficulty. There was a carriage with a pair of horses on the other side, which was ready in a few minutes, and in two hours I was again in a British colonial town. The best hotel is full. I have to take up with a place kept by a drunken lout from High Wickham, whose wife, however, has sense and cleanliness. The bad specimens of colonists copy the Kafirs, and leave their wives to work while they drink and sleep. This poor woman slaves to keep things straight, but with imperfect success. The diamonds, she says, have turned everybody's head. There is more money, but living is ruinously expensive, and no one is the better for it.

I passed a farm on my way here which was a model in its way. The owner was an Englishman,

and when an Englishman will work at agriculture, he shows the Dutchman how to do it.

Colesberg itself lies in a rocky valley, more than 4000 feet above the sea, and is geologically the strangest place I ever saw. A huge flat-topped mountain rises over it, formed of alternate layers of stratified rock and ironstone, the horizontal beds perfectly even, as if they had never been disturbed, yet beds of igneous rock, many hundred feet thick, lying on the top of them.

New Bedford, Dec. 24.—We are descending from the highlands at last, and are again among the jessamines and the orange-trees. Five days ago I left Colesberg with a cart and pair of horses to make my way down the colony, and I have travelled at the rate of about fifty miles a day. The first evening after sunset I passed a handsome house belonging to a Dutchman. He was sitting in the twilight outside his door with his wife, a middle-aged lady, but still handsome, and with beautiful eyes. I stopped to give the horses some water. We fell into conversation. I asked for fresh milk. They sent a boy to the stable with a tumbler to milk a cow for me. They invited me to stay there for the night, with a courtesy and repose of manner which no English lord and lady could have outdone. The Dutch having been long

settled in the country have a dignity about them which contrasts favourably with Anglo-colonial smartness. I regretted to leave them, but it was moonlight, and we pushed on. The roads, which are bad enough by day, are horrible at night. They are mere wheel-tracks, the ruts a foot or two deep, and the baked clay through which they are cut now as hard as stone. The road commissioners are the country farmers. I said to some one that I met on the way, that I supposed the Dutch rarely left their homes, and so did not care. I was told that if I could choose a road that led to a church I should always find it good. The farmers will go with their families fifty miles to a church, and never miss a church festival. The ministers are better paid than average state officials, and the Dutch meeting-houses are the handsomest buildings in South Africa. I saw, in passing through Cradock, a church which would have been called fine anywhere in Europe. The Dutch farmers of the neighbourhood had built it entirely. The news about the floods is too true. Although it is summer there has been a heavy fall of snow on the mountains. It has melted suddenly. Violent rain falling at the same time, has burst simultaneously a number of ill-made reservoirs, and the Great Fish River has risen to forty feet above its natural level. The banks are

wooded. The torrent rushing over them tears out the trees by the roots, and the river rolls along, carrying with it enormous masses of floating timber. No imaginable bridge can stand such a strain, and it is a serious problem how the railways are by-and-by to be carried over these rivers. A druggist at Cradock, whose son is at a Scotch university, kindly took charge of me as an ex-Lord Rector. He placed me in the hands of an experienced young Dutchman who knew the points where the Fish River could be crossed, and, after less serious difficulties than befell me at the Modder, I am now within 120 miles of Port Elizabeth. New Bedford is one of the prettiest towns which I have seen, nestled among densely wooded mountains, and luxurious with the wild variety of sub-tropical vegetation. Half a mile distant, among orange groves, and approached through vast oak avenues, lie the remains of the ruined house of Sir Andrew Stockenstrom, who was so honourably distinguished in the last generation by his endeavours to protect and raise the native tribes on the borders. The house was burnt in one of the Kafir wars, and has not been restored. The trees which were planted round it would be splendid even in an English park. All else is desolate. Wild jessamines creep among the broken casements. A dismounted cannon of the last century, with a

Dutch inscription, lies half-buried under leaves, and as a practical comment on the owner's chivalrous efforts to elevate the Kafir race by mere benevolence, the town to-day is full of black creatures of both sexes and all ages, who have come in to drink, and are lying about in the sun idle and masterless.

Tunbridge, Dec. 26.—Only thirty miles left. Saw the sea to-day from the final ridge over which we crossed, and, after my long battering journey, I cried out like the vanguard of the ten thousand when they looked down on Trebizond. For the last two days we have been descending through picturesque ravines, studded with the African aloe. The open hills blaze with mesembryanthemums. The ivy-leaf geranium runs like a creeper up the stems of the trees on the river-sides, and pours its flowers in cascades over the branches. The banks of the streams are fringed with the fronds of giant ferns. This afternoon we took our last leap, 1200 feet, down into the plain, through winding glens, once the scenes of our most desperate battles with the Kafirs, now warm and glowing in the soft light of a summer sunset, fragrant with the million blossoms of the wild Cape jessamine, and with no more formidable animals concealed among the thickets than armies of grey baboons, which were playing on the grassy lawns that opened in the in-

tervals of the forest. One very large fellow, with white whiskers and sharp twinkling eyes, stood half hidden in a bush to watch us as we passed. My negro driver, silent and solemn hitherto, burst into shouts of delight at the sight of his relation. I begged him to be silent, that I might get a nearer view, but he understood the matter better than I did. He addressed Jock, as he called him, in terms of affectionate greeting. Jock chattered, slipped round the bush, and waved his paw. I had just seen worse manners at the last hotel which I had passed, where the innkeeper boasted to me that, when the late Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, called there he had made Sir Philip know that he, in his own house, was as good a governor as the other. A free Africander was not going to humble himself before the best Excellency that could be sent from England.

Tunbridge, Sunday evening, Dec. 27.—The last day of my singular journey. I have travelled 1500 miles on the roughest roads that I have ever been jolted over, amidst thunderstorms and hard living and nights without sleep. Had I been thirty, it would have been the most delightful of adventures. When one is near sixty, adventures cease to be exhilarating. When I was leaving Maritzburg, plunging into the heart of an unknown wilderness, I thought of Faust

descending to "the Mothers" and Mephistopheles's

Ich bin neugierig wenn er wiederkommt.

I am a stone lighter than when I was last at Port Elizabeth. In a Potcheffstrom newspaper I saw myself described as "a lean grey old gentleman," but I am strong and well, and none the worse for what I have gone through. If I can convince others as I have convinced myself that the annexation of the Diamond Fields was a crime and a blunder, and that if South Africa is to prosper as a British dependency, we must find some means to repair the wrong which we were misled into committing, my small exertions will not have been wholly thrown away.[1]

[1] Compensation has since been made to the Free State, and the Diamond Fields are British territory, with the full consent of the President and the Volksraad.—Feb. 1877.

THE END.

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